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FUTURE

RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AMERICA.

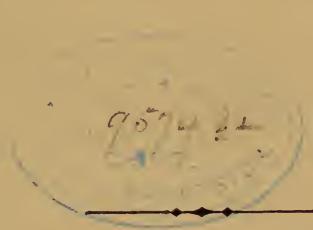
A DISCUSSION OF

ELEVEN GREAT LIVING QUESTIONS.

BY



WILLIAM RILEY HALSTEAD.



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To

THOMAS BOWMAN, D. D., LL. D.,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

By the Author.

P R E F A C E.

THIS volume is offered to the public without apology. It goes out in search of readers. Its pages discuss a variety of the greatest of living questions, concerning which there is a wide difference of sentiment, and, as yet, no adjustment. The reasonable reader will not look for a book of this kind to be an array of universally accepted opinions. Any class of inferences drawn from the related facts of secular and religious history is likely to be more or less contested. If the book helps to make better Christians and better patriots of the people of this country, the author's purpose is accomplished.

TERRE HAUTE, APRIL, 1877.

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FUTURE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

CORRELATIONS OF LAW AND PROVIDENCE.

WHEN this age shall write itself in history, it will doubtless be seen, that our civilization has not yet reached the divine ideal, and is therefore hardly able to follow out its consequences. There are foreign currents running through our complex national life, which, for a period, may hold us in bondage to ancient errors. A great task is reserved until this time, that of using the past and the future of history to place in their just relations the physical wants and the spirit life of man.

There are principles of human foresight in the nature and connection of events, and in the human mind and heart,—principles in no way related to the superstitions of the fortune-teller, or the jugglings of the astrologer. An intimate knowledge of the past will enable the sagacious mind to foretell events with great precision. History has set up guideboards, showing the ways of prosperity and adversity. The world to-day is standing on a vantage ground of nearly six thousand years, from which it

is better able to see its surroundings and look further into the future. Whoever has undertaken to solve the vexed problem of American history may study his lesson by the beautiful and constant light of analogy which has been thrown over the annals of mankind.

The moral and civil convulsions of history have been preceded by signs too plain to be mistaken. Tacitus foretold the downfall of Rome, and the invasion of the Barbarians. Charlemagne, when he first saw the Normans invade his dominions, predicted the calamities which befell his empire for a century afterward. Sir Walter Raleigh foresaw what would come in consequence of the sectaries of the English Church. Bishop Butler, in his sermon before the House of Lords, uttered a grand and true prediction concerning the political disorders which would arise from the atheistical principles of the eighteenth century. The reflecting minds of England predicted the independence of the American colonies thirty years before it occurred. Coleridge and Mazarin and Marshall and Mansfield and Burke and Pitt and Rousseau were political predictors of great sagacity. Statesmen of our own country, for years preceding the great crisis which unmanacled the black man of the South, foresaw that the popular mind was becoming ripe for something tragical. Patriotism and dread, no doubt, time and again kept back the prophecy from many lips.

In spite of the political antagonisms of Clay and Webster and Calhoun, it often hung equally, like an impending shadow upon their brows. The time

came nearer, and the political horizon gave signs that a storm of civil discord was gathering to drench our southern soil in blood. From its hurtlings in the atmosphere, we not only believed, we felt there would be war. So deep have been the presentiments of those turbulent convulsions which have swept nations to their graves, that in ancient times the sympathy of nature was supposed to have brought the warnings. On the other hand, those glimpses of prosperity and peace which the nations have been able to wrest from their favorable surroundings have awakened the highest energies of the race, and have led it with a throbbing life into the greatest glories.

This is not the work of fatalism or chance. The world's progress and decline hinges forever on the operation of free and contingent causes. Every fiber of man's moral agency rises in rebellion against any thing like a blind and inexorable decree. There is no such thing as chance. Accidents never happen. These words are found in our language expressing ideas which appear on the surface of things, but which have no foundation in reality. If any thing could happen by chance, there would be no grounds of dependence anywhere; the most dreadful uncertainty would prevail, an irresponsible definition would be given to the occurrences of life, and that gladness which comes up out of the most unfortunate events would be subverted and destroyed.

Law.—All nature indicates the existence of controlling law. Proofs of its dominion are on every hand. In the physical world, and in the moral

world as well, an order and a system is discovered, so extensive, so regular and uniform, that the shrewdest minds have been led into the belief that it is the sole governor of the universe. Nature, with its beauty and grandeur, the mote in the sunbeam, and the vast sweep of the planets, with the hushed music of their silence, all feel the tread of cosmic law. Atoms and systems are alike under its control. It quietly forges a chain of natural causes to engirdle the globe. Its giant forces, in their vast extent, have been toiling on for ages, with a profound order which baffles conception. A universe of law is the sublimest natural truth with which we are acquainted.

Certainty.—Law is invested with great certainty. The sun has made his appearance in the zones at known times, without a single variation for thousands of years. The inclined plane of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit around the sun, invariably causes the change in the seasons.

Gravitation operates according to known and established principles through all space. With many misgivings the mind may accept and memorize the first statements in astronomy, but when it is led to the calculation of an eclipse of the sun, wherein so many data are used, so many sure principles are applied, the last shadows of incredulity take the wings of the morning. Even the proposition that two straight lines may forever approach each other yet never meet, is divested of all uncertainty in the application of mathematical laws. These are so many evidences that law in itself is absolutely reliable.

Relentless.—Law is stern and relentless in its operation. Fire burns. Cold freezes. A needle point penetrating to the seat of life will invariably produce death. The rifleman's bullet whistles through the air with death on its wing, and sinks as fatally into the heart of a comrade as if sent purposely in pursuit of an enemy. The waves of the sea have overwhelmed many a drowning saint. A solid stone wall will not tumble down simply to break the head of a villain when he crouches in its shadow. To leap from a precipice is to court known and fatal consequences. As certainly as the atmospheric forces gather, and the conditions are at hand, the whirlwind sweeps down upon the city, devastating palaces and hovels alike; as regardless of the life of the child as the robber. Law goes ringing relentlessly down the changes of cause and effect like the car on its track; and woe betide men or nations if they cross its pathway. The only way to escape appalling disaster, or enjoy protection, is to know and obey. There is no concession, no compromise, no respect for moral ends, in all its great dominion. For this reason worshipers of law are generally fatalists and disbelievers in the Christian system.

The exclusive investigation of material forces tends to smother the emotions, to clip the wings of faith, and make the moral man cry out for anguish.

Law and History.—There are knowable certainties in the moral world. Ethical laws are as inexorable as the law of atoms. They operate almost with the certainty of an equation in geometry. In the world's

economy, it is not only necessary that an orderly arrangement be imposed on nature, but should be manifested in the most intricate and mysterious relations of life. Hereon is reached the great high ground of security in the regulation of human conduct. History, in a secondary sense, is but a strife for man's ascendancy over the material world. As the conflict proceeds, the sternest physical forces are subordinated, and as by the wand of the enchanter, they are transmuted into laws for the social compact. This is more especially true of the last thousand years. The first ages were comparative strangers to the economic sciences which have now become giant sources of wealth and progress. Hoary kingdoms grew up and passed away, in the fertile belts of the Nile and Euphrates, and on the plains of inland Asia, before the human race had learned to wrest from nature the eternal secrets of a nation's greatest power. We have inherited from antiquity her languages, her poetry, her fine arts, her philosophies, and her religions. These come to us with unequaled excellence. But the spirit of invention and discovery, the omnipotence of agriculture, and this international network of commerce, are all our own. Thus our legitimate pantheistic prayer is being answered in the appliance of laws to work out results, for which we have no examples in the past. And yet, while these new enterprises may bring luster to our name, while they may greatly modify and develop, they will never make any radical change in the ancient order of things. Draper's overdrawn parallel between the life of the individual and the

nation has in it the elements of a great truth. Youth, manhood, old age—this is the order. A nation's virtue may prolong this life; a nation's infamy may cut it short, but can never change it.

The child lives under a succession of unreal appearances. He views the world through a telescope whose foundations are laid in the unsettled surface-grounds of human experience, and he gets a blurred image. Volition stirs the leaf. The birds of the air divine his intentions. He is fascinated by all that he can not comprehend. Whatever is strange, or powerful, or vast, impresses him with dread. Youth is the mythological age of individual life. Its vague fancies are characteristic. They are the scintillations of an immortal fire within, soon to be revealed in the steady blaze of manhood. The fruition of knowledge can not be enjoyed in childhood. The vigor of manhood can not be retained in the sunset of life. These laws of man's being are inviolable, absolute. So with nations; from rude beginnings development brings into the full tide of strength; time advances, and if history is any criterion, decrepitude and death ensue. Unless the Gospel triumphs, or unless some new and strange light is thrown over the annals of our time, the day is coming when our metropolitan centers will stand in ruins, and be visited by the curious, as men now marvel at the desolations of Jerusalem and Nimroud.

The Fetich worship of Egypt began in an age of myth. Her proud manhood begins with the building of the pyramids, and extends through the line of her Ptolemies. Her decrepitude may be dated from the

destruction of Alexandria, and the burning of the Serapion.

The Hebrews were children in their bondage, and through the desert. A nucleus of strength begins with the Judges, and culminates with Solomon. Decrepitude is induced by the captivity, and the national mission, save what prophecy reveals, ends in Christ.

The age of mythology in Greece gave rise to the expedition of the Argonauts. It gave incident to the lives of its fabulous heroes. It furnished material for the songs of Homer. It developed those ridiculous tales concerning the gods, which, in after time, were polished into one of the most beautiful and fascinating philosophies the world has ever known. The Grecian age of reason was that of her poets and rhetoricians and statesmen. The decline of Grecian countries was contemporary with the rise of the Roman Empire.

We are all acquainted with the impossible tales of Romulus and Remus; the romantic story of the Sabian women; the Vestal fires, and the heroism of Regulus. We read of fauns and nymphs and sirens without number; and how all Italy was filled with the mystic whisperings of a thousand sacred groves. While the youth were being educated, some sceptical Roman had climbed the heights of Olympus, without finding the dwelling-place of a single god. The discovery of the deception, with a thousand others in the ancient mythological worship, prepared the people to be lifted forever above paganism. The ingrafting of Christianity brought new impulses into the empire, and Rome's glory is now known as the

theme of much eloquence and song. In course of time, the nation's energies were paralyzed by corruption. Then began her decline; through a long line of events, extending over a period of nine hundred years—a splendid architecture; fields once a garden; a grand civilization; finally destroyed by the ruthless Goth and Vandal.

These illustrations, in themselves, only approximate, yet they impress the meaning, and show how the nations are being controlled by fixed and eternal principles; and how the same great causes of growth and decay are operated all along, and are at work now. Who does not believe that Spain is dying, or that France will never again become omnipotent among the nations?

If we can possibly discover the great virus of death which has desolated countries in the past, we may be able to shun it, and lay hold on surer principles, such as will always bring with them the greatest wealth of happiness.

Providence.—As all nature indicates the existence of law, so all intelligence and reason add their testimony to the existence of a superintending Providence over human affairs. We are now approaching disputed ground. If infidelity can get rid of a divine Providence, the stronghold of the Christian system is taken; the fatalism of law will rule the world.

Over the fact of God's intelligent government of the world, the hosts of the Lord and of Antichrist are struggling. All subordinate conflicts ultimately relate to this one.

The discussion upon which we are about to enter will be easy or difficult, according to the kind of proof expected. If a demonstration of the existence of the Divine Supervision is demanded, we surrender the task as hopeless. A moral truth can not be demonstrated. We have to do, at present, not with a conclusion, but a principle—one of the first of all principles. It is *a priori* in itself. The highest degree of probability should be satisfactory in its discussion. A satisfactory proof may perhaps be found in the accumulative argument of the ages; in the general consent of the wisest and best of the nations. If an opinion is shown to be world wide; if it is found on every page of sacred and profane history; if the world has prospered in its belief; if it additionally bears the stamp of reason on its face; and above all, if it appeals like an intuition to the soul, the evidence in its favor is very strong.

The natural theologies of the world have always given off about the same results. There is but very little difference in the great under-currents of native religious thought and feeling, the world over. The hungerings of the race have led it to the unfolding of about the same principles of truth every-where. A substratum of fact underlies all pagan and Christian systems alike; in which have germinated ideas of the Divine Being, known at present as the common property of mankind. These ideas, so nearly the same among all peoples, are not likely to be far from right, unless there are contradictions in the human character. This being true, the opinions of men in all ages of the world concerning these universal

notions, are valuable. The notion of a divine supervision is not the fruit of Christianity. It is the natural product of man's spirit nature, seeking the relation it holds to its Author.

The classic ages are full of the recognitions of a Providence. The philosophical starting-point of Pythagoras was unity. Unity multiplies itself into all phenomena; is universally diffused, is the universal harmonizer, the source of all being and truth. This essence of things was celebrated as Deity; and was the foundation of a system intended to teach the orderly arrangement of things, leading to an end. Unity was necessary to the soul's immortality; and it placed man's whole life under the guidance of the gods. Pindar, the lyric poet of Greece, was so imbued with a divine superintendency that success in life was attributed to supernatural causes. Herodotus, the father of profane history, declared that the structure of the world gave evidence of an intelligent author. He says, "Divine Providence appears to be, as one might expect beforehand, a wise contriver." Æschylus, the Greek Milton, fought at Marathon, exulted with the victors, and ascribed the wonderful deliverances to the gods. Cicero, the prince of orators, says, "If we every way examine the universe, it is apparent from the greatest reason, that the whole is admirably governed by a Providence for the safety and preservation of all beings."

Livy, Rome's historian, ascribes the greatness of the nation to the blessing of the gods, and the greatness of the city to the fates. The fates, in mythology, imply influences akin to the intelligent operations

of Providence with law. They are certainly not blind necessities; as may be seen from the obvious connection in which the word is often used, especially in Virgil. Livy searches antiquity, and finds that his own spirit is in sympathy with that which the wisest should have cherished. Tacitus vibrates between skepticism and unbounded faith. When his prophecies of punishment fail, he despairs; but when the lecherous corruption of his time meets its doom, he speaks of divine interposition, as if no shadow of a doubt had ever crossed his mind. In the lives of Plutarch this idea almost reaches the magnitude of a system. Seneca had a vivid conception of God's intelligent government. In praise of Jupiter, he says, "Will you call him providence, with justice, for he it is whose wisdom cares for the world, so that it moves on without confusion to fill its task?" Epicurus declares that any one thing in creation is sufficient to a grateful mind to convince of a Providence. Antoninus came to the conclusion that whatever was ordained of God was full of wisdom and mercy. To him, a God without benevolence, and intelligent care was inconceivable.

Plautus, the Stoic philosopher, advocated a self-surrender to the divine will. Apuleius, an African by birth, and a lover of the Platonic philosophy, believed that an evil destiny might be averted, and that the eye of the All-wise was ever attentive to the distress and sufferings of an innocent soul, involving the necessity for events to be adapted according to merit and justice. Al Ghazzali, the Mohammedan philosopher, believed that human adversity was the

bridle of God's love to draw his followers into the paradise above. The vast aggregate of Oriental nations bearing on this point presents but few distinctions from Western conceptions before the Christian era. There are no prominent variations in the creeds of all peoples, even if traced back to the world's great Spring-time. King Cyrus simply uttered the religious belief of all Persia when he said, "The gods watch over my safety, and warn me beforehand of every danger." Eastern idolatrous belief, in theory, harmonized with the Bible. The book of Jób is little more than a polished index of patriarchal belief from the Nile country to the banks of the Indus. Lactantius, though a Christian, was famed for his extensive knowledge of heathen philosophies. He vindicates the doctrine of a Providence with the argument that it was the accepted sentiment of the ages. St. Ambrose likewise contends that the notion was universal.

As idolatry, abstractly, enters as an element in the proof of the universal religious nature of man; as nearly all the more prominent pagan systems have been invested with the idea of a sacrifice; which is, doubtless, a collateral truth in history, intended to be the handmaid of prophecy, and speed the inception of the atonement; so this element of truth, like a vein of gold, has been found running through all ethnic religions. It is shadowed in the mother of the gods, in Vesta, in Minerva, in Diana, in the Egyptian Isis, and a thousand other forms. Athena was seen in the beauty of the morning dawn; Zeus was seen in the sublimity of the deep blue sky;

Hephaestos in the sun; Neptune in the sea; Æolus in the wind; Jupiter in the roaring thunder; Bacchus in the vine; Ceres in the ripening corn. When ancient belief is pruned of its excrescence, nature becomes the living vesture of God; the illuminated and resplendent background, upon which the lights and shadows of infinite thought are seen to play. In human concerns, it was the same. Mercury was recognized in the civilized arts. In music and in poetry, Apollo was invoked. In the mechanism of metals, Vulcan was the helper. In the sanguinary billows of Greek or Trojan war, red-handed Mars was always visible. These busy creations of the brain show it to be the heart's best friend. These are emblems of the divine, having a common origin with Grecian oracle and Roman sibyline. They are glimpses of the Infinite, coming up from the world's dim twilight; faint echoes from the mystic borderlands of the supernatural. The truth of a divine supervision stands out as a bold factor in all mythology, and proclaims itself to be as deep-seated as man's moral nature.

Hence, it appears that revealed religion has only taken this truth like it has taken the great moral laws of the human heart; it has more definitely defined, has re-promulgated, has authoritatively announced it. It comes neither from reason nor experience. The gleamings of its light, just like the divine law God wrote on the heart of the heathen, shines out wherever souls have been born. It is as resplendent in the life of the American Indian as in the reasoning of Plato. It is often found like an unpol-

ished diamond in the rudest fetich worship. It is not a matter of speculation; its most fitting and eloquent expressions are found in man's inner consciousness. The belief is inwoven in the very fabric of his being. It is one of those grand doctrines, in which the impulses of the soul are led to overleap its theories; and which, in defiance of all opposing forces, continually asserts itself in human history and human life. There is one and the same reason for a Providence and the immortality of the soul. A thousand death-blows may be aimed at its existence, and yet, like the soul's thirsting for a higher and better being, it still lives, with the impulsive beatings of an immortal life that will never give over the ambition, that God is somewhere near enough to see and understand.

Such is the wonderful fitness of this belief in the human heart and mind that the most sanguinary and desperate men reflect its nativity in those unfortunate times when they cry out for help from a higher power, hardly knowing what they say. There is certainly in life an instinctive sense of dependence and relation with the infinite. The heart's natural aspirations for an infinite helper in the difficulties of life have given birth, under the warpings of depravity, to every false religious system of the globe. This is the meaning of man's religious nature. That all things work together for good to them that love God was felt in the natural heart long before it found expression in the Book of Inspiration.

Look out on the theater of struggling generations, where vast multitudes of men have been surging from the extreme grounds of barbarism

and enlightenment, knowing little of the past, and living only in the shadows of the present, having only a possible conception of the great indefinite future; above and over all may be heard the voice of that universal prayer, "Our Father," revealing in clearest outline what God ought to be, just as he has been shown to be in the Gospel of his Son.

As has been asserted, the doctrine of a Providence has not been relegated to the realms of barbarism and credulity; it owes its highest development to minds of culture. Men of learning and refinement have investigated its claims, and found them just. Lord Bacon, that universal genius, who drove from the face of Europe the last long shadows of the mediæval age, says, "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Alcoran than that this universal frame was without a mind." From Bacon's time, and the intellectual awakening which his philosophy produced, when a new era of thought took hold on the world, the vigorous reflection of two centuries of development and revolution has wrought a grand confirmation of the belief of antiquity.

Relation.—The religious history of the world shows very conclusively that there has been too great stress laid on its supernatural and miraculous phases. The remotest infractions of the natural order have been magnified, have been carefully garnered in the great storehouse of miracles, and have been used as accumulative evidence against any extensive influence of secondary causes. It may be

stated as a principle and method of the divine economy that supernatural agencies are never called into requisition when natural agencies will answer the purpose. Many illustrations might be given of this truth. The most wonderful handiwork of the Almighty may be seen outside the blaze of miracle. Human instrumentalities, as they are ordinarily utilized through the ages to bring out the divine purposes, are indeed lever arms in the world's salvation. If this had always been remembered in ecclesiastical history, the widening realm of scientific research had not offered such a supposed paralyzing to religious thought.

Let us confess the blunder, and as soon as possible acknowledge God as the *natural* administrator of the material world, as the successful and intelligent manager of social, civil, and religious forces. The attempted shout of triumph with which the skeptic greets the sentiments of the Christian philosopher when he appeals to any natural system for his arguments is not consistent. Christianity vies with unbelief in the praise of nature's doings. All known laws are but stepping-stones, enabling faith to walk up and reach above them to the great Law-giver. The sublimest deductions in material science may enter as an element in Christian devotion. They become the handmaids of religion because they give broader and more comprehensive views to human adoration.

A rocky mountain peak, thrown up by physical convulsions, presents a dark picture of terrible sublimity. If flowers are planted in the moss of its

crevices, if it is spread over with sunbeams, its gloomy grandeur is dispelled. To establish the relation of things is to bring a soul of unclouded goodness from them. From certain quarters the utterance is being repeated over and over, This mountain of law is immovable; the activities of nature are never suspended; the relations of these activities are never changed by any external influence whatever. No mountain is to be removed, no law suspended, no radical change is proposed, but to change some of the unnatural relations of the race to these laws. The sun in heaven never changes, but shines on in the same eternal splendor. See him through all the year the same sun, whether in the heat of Summer or the frost of Winter, whether through the vapor or through the mist, in the clear sky or hid in the cloud, as rising in the morning or fading into night: these varied relations do not change the sun; they add to human happiness, they change man. These activities hold in themselves a moral purpose; they contain a dispensation of love to brook the malignity of the adversary, who, in the world's harvest-field, has been sowing tares; they tend to make pure again the river of life, so foul from the taint of human history.

The planets revolve on their axes, and are kept in motion. The orderly arrangement of the celestial orbs is their glory. A grand security is felt in that the ages have pledged that there shall be no clashing, no collision, no wandering worlds broken from their restraints and rushing blindly through space to bring chaos in the material world. But, after all, there must have been some master hand to inaugurate

these splendors; there must be some presiding intelligence to bring out creation's purposes, and set the coronet of glory on its brow. Law reveals continuity, providence reveals God. One needs intelligence and love, the other an underlying method. They are not mutually exclusive, because there have been no encroachments, no ancient feuds to be settled. There is no need of a reconciliation, for there have never been any variances.

There are objections to this intelligent control of things, because it is so uncertain, so checkered and mysterious. The same objection might be urged against the intelligent and independent operations of the human mind. It is not so hard to see the hand of God in great things, such as the prosperity of a nation, or in calamities, such as the burning of a Boston or a Chicago, as in minor affairs. The smaller and less important events of life and history often have no meaning when viewed separately. Put a hundred events of life or a hundred years of history together, and there are evidences of a wonderful design. The visions of the sheaves and the stars will not explain Joseph's incarceration, neither will the darkness of his Egyptian dungeon throw any light on the visions. It takes Pharaoh's dream and its results to drive away the mystery of a life. Moses in the bulrushes, with the eye of God on him as the future lawgiver of Israel, has no significance in the human understanding until it becomes a link in the chain of his wonderful subsequent career. It is in this way that the most adverse circumstances of individual and national life find a place in the divine economy. All

history is adorned with such deliverances, and in them God displays his infinitude. The Almighty vindicates his sleepless guardianship in that he brings moral discipline out of the world's disorders.

It may be said these are natural things. Certainly they are natural, intelligently natural. God uses nature as the tool of his workmanship. What else would he do with it? It is not only reasonable but highly probable that God would rule the world very greatly through the mediation of natural forces.

The child reaches out its hand to take hold on the flame of the lamp; the mother interferes, and saves the child from pain, or allows the hand to go near enough to learn the nature of the flame. In the child is seen life's inexperience. In the flame, the blind force of law. In the mother, the protecting hand of Providence.

In this and like illustrations may be found a *relational fact*, which rises into the magnitude of a system whose scope can alone be comprehended by the reaches of an infinite mind. To keep in remembrance this fact is to know that the world's history is not simply a chronological record. Beginning as it does with the fair title-page of man's innocence, and ending only with the last printed leaf of yesterday, it is a very thoughtful volume. Its pages are alternately covered with cheering lessons of prosperity, and the most serious problems of ruin and decay. The clock-strokes which ring out the spirit hour of the present can never banish the perpetual fact that the whole book has been inspired with an

infinite purpose. Its words and letters are lit up with the luster of a divine benevolence.

Nations have been wrecked on rocks that were half-hidden to antiquity; but wherever a nation has gone down, Providence has built a light-house. Thus the causes of every great calamity in the past are generally marked and plain, and they become as the voice of God, speaking with the authority of his finger on the two tables of stone. The world grows wiser as it grows older. As time rolls on, the bare possibilities of to-day become the realities of to-morrow. Each succeeding generation of men stand on the shoulders of the age preceding, and are able to discover more minutely the springs of human action. God covenanted with Abraham, and we have seen fulfilled what Abraham only anticipated. In the developments of history, we not only see the operation of unalterable laws, but we see where God interposes his arm, and we learn where he is likely to reach it out in the future. In this manner we may estimate what both God and nature will bring out of events. The world is now old enough to have laws of history, and this age ought to be wise enough to apply them.

The purely natural course of events may be determined more definitely than the providential, where the mind is able to separate the two. That is, we are measurably more certain of the operation of God's laws than of God himself. The human mind can calculate better upon physical causes than upon divinely intelligent causes.

Yet, so far as they are known, they may be relied on as producing results consistent for all time.

The divine mind has control of the moral causes which operate in society and the body politic. And they are so operated as to bring about moral ends. National rewards and punishments are apt to be meted out in full in this world. Righteousness exalteth a nation, as surely as the heat of Summer follows the directest rays of the sun. On the other hand, to use the language of Watson, "In succession, every vicious nation has perished; and always by means so marked, and often so singular, as to bear upon them a broad and legible punitive character." At the same time, while corruption may bring punishment, while rebellion against the great laws of human welfare has been followed by the direst penalties, by the desolation of countries and the burial of races; above and over all may be seen surmounting influences surviving revolutions, leading on to some great end. In all the varied and diverse aims of men, in all the ambitious schemes of rulers, which in themselves are calculated to bring desolation wherever they are wrought out, every thing seems to move under the control of a wisdom which keeps them from bringing utter woe to the world. While Julius Cæsar was building up the fortunes of his career in Gaul and Britain; while Augustus is plundering the eastern territory to rebuild and beautify Rome; while the barbarous Alaric is trampling under foot the remains of Greek civilization, and is asserting the supremacy of force over the dawdling kings and corrupted Church of Italy, leaving the world nothing but the crimson sign of rapine and war; while the inexorable logic of events is spreading

the shroud of the dark ages over fallen empires; while the frenzied hordes of Europe are rushing to rescue the shrines of the devoted city, in all this the student of history discerns the power of an omnipotent arm shaping the world's policies, and bringing from them the grandest and most extensive results for the world's general welfare. While the crossing of the Mohammedans from Constantinople into Turkey, and from Gibraltar into Spain, finally caused all Europe to cower before the sword of the Saracen, other influences were at work bringing from the dread invader a revival of letters which is felt until this time, though with a tardy recognition. While the burning ambition of Napoleon was drenching the kingdoms of Europe in blood, another agency was utilizing his life-force in lifting the European mind forever from the intellectual bondage of Feudalism. These are star gleams of hope breaking across a very dark pathway. It is thus that the gold and the ivory and the gems of this shattered wall of humanity are carefully gathered up, and used in the adornment of a more beautiful temple, whose architecture is from the sky.

Finally, there can be no question of greater interest to those who have been born and nurtured in this free American air than that which asks for an insight into our present national surroundings and for a pre-
vision of our ultimate destiny. What genius shall preside in our deliberations? Shall the materialism of money and secular concerns sway the helm of State, and by legal enactments drive a recognition of the divine from our borders? Shall Romanism be allowed

to mold our plastic social life with methods which have been disciplined for a thousand years, and lead our land back over the per'rous ground of ecclesiastical history? Who shall be helmsman in guiding our national ship over the shoals and by the breakers into the deep, peaceful waters? And if the storm should gather over us, what great spirit shall stand on the rock of truth, call to its aid the spirit of the age, notice which way the wind is blowing, where the waves are rolling, and, with a steady hand, reach out and rescue whatever is adrift? There are forces at work in the body politic, in the Church, and in society, which have touched the moving springs of the world's history. These forces are likely to bring about greater results now than ever before, because of their collective strength, and because of the magnitude of the interests which have gathered around them. From whence shall come our confidence in the midst of these serious social problems? What is it that will make our people cheerful in disaster, calm in the hour of peril, or submissive in adversity? What voice shall rebuke our corruptions, denounce the evils of our civilization, and secure in place of them honor and virtue?

The voice of the common people, coming up from our homes and our schools, where the character is formed, where the heart is trained under the impress that *God rules*. This is the enkindling, complementing power in society. There can be no permanent social structure built on any other basis. It requires an infinite motive to give full scope to the energies of a nation's life. Hence those counselors who gain

a broad and deep insight into affairs advocate the Bible in the public-schools as a matter of expediency. Outside the fact of its inspiration, politically considered, it is the safeguard of the nation's existence, it is the protecting shield of all free government. It is the same in the higher departments of education. Every thing should be complemented with a recognition of the divine. As long as our college curriculums lay hold on ancient thought and philosophy, and open out through the languages those attractive systems so fatally divorced from modern sentiment, it is well to teach in comparison the evidences of revealed truth, to show its superiority and fitness.

In this connection it is an inspiring fact that our American university system has risen mostly from the impulses of Christian benevolence. Its founders have been men born of the noblest voluntary aims. Our thoughtful and thorough educators seem to have been expecting these serious times, and have given great attention to the principles of the divine life. The supreme importance of the moral sciences is being recognized. Butler's Analogy is becoming the head-light of learning. This age is calling for *men*, men who are willing to surrender themselves to a disinterested and unselfish labor, men who are to perpetuate the heritage of our fathers, in the remembrance, that behind our learning, behind our wealth, behind our physical potencies, there is a power which will not only speed us toward the promised aidenn, but will make the chariot wheels of our enemies drag heavily. There is danger that, in the busy enterprises of the next century, we may be induced to forget our

colonial instincts. As well might the astronomer try to pursue his investigations without the laws of Kepler. Not only the Church, but the nation, from private conviction co-operating with God, is clearly the mission of the new age.

CHAPTER II.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE WORLD.

IT is not so hard to see wherein the past has blundered as to profit by these blunders. The statement is made good in the fact that, while a small part of the territorial world has built its structures of government with greater security from the old dangers, vast portions have gone on, heedless of all disaster, and are yet holding to old and fatal waymarks, or they are giving way before incoming enterprises. It is no easy task to study dispassionately, and apply the religious influences of the present. One is likely to mistake personal whims and preferences for the spirit of the age. There is danger of being directed by false guides, of unconsciously fighting against God and declaring, remotely, at least, in favor of wrong. There is a tendency of self-seeking in human nature giving undue weight to the particular influences under which it has been thrown, magnifying very greatly the importance of whatever is of most interest in religion, in family, or in country. Then, again, the equilibrium can not always be known in the vibrations of history. It may not always be known on which side of the ship to throw one's weight for a counterpoise. The first impulse is to

rush toward the center of gravity with the multitude. In this investigation, whatever can not be seen and corrected, it is proposed to commit to Him who is always at the helm of life's great vessel; and then, though the multitudes on deck may topple the ship and go overboard into the sea, the ship will ride on finding new cargoes until the voyage is ended.

On the face of the religious world new lights and shadows are appearing every day. The age is hastening, the stream of thought and sentiment is flowing, leaving such dim and varied impressions that it becomes difficult to assimilate and fix its marks on the mind and heart. The soberest judgment is often at a loss to know what elements to trust, what controversy to shun. It will be impossible, from now on, to confine either reasoning or speculation to sectional or channeled interests. The world's views are growing broader. New means are being employed for the interchange of thought and opinion. Peoples are becoming acquainted with each other on a grander scale than ever before. As this acquaintance is extended men enlarge and lift their views.

There is a disposition now among all classes, in every civilized country, to look forward rather than backward; to expect a future greater than the past; to reach heights heretofore unattained. The road to these heights is now regarded as an open, free way. All men and all nations are now challenged to the fullest activity and the highest enterprise. The old entralling powers of will-force and absolutism are not very well adapted to the multiplied and intelligent energies of to-day. Thought-force and reason,

coupled with the broadest freedom, instead, are remolding life and society. From this cause, perhaps, more than any other, the world is taking a hopeful view of itself. In all the miseries of our time, in all the anxieties filling the souls of Christians, in all the perplexities of conscience, in all our national dangers, in the overwhelming issues which are to be decided in the crisis of the next century, in all this dying away of the principle of life, in all the invasions of positive and threatening evils, there are but few despairing views of the world; there is no great uneasiness above that which is natural to human endeavor.

This confidence in the future has been growing stronger in all Christian countries since the hour of the incarnation. Often when some dreadful and ruinous hand was lifted over the Church men expected it to die, but it lived. When dissension and rivalry in the bosom of the Church often convulsed nations and deluged continents in blood, men looked for the fair name of Christianity to be buried in the blackness of hatred and strife; but it lived. Time and again, when selfish interests have been advanced under the semblance of religion, the world has been smitten with the divine wrath. Yet, after the smiting, God said: "Cheer up, now; there is hope for the future." Hence the world is becoming settled in the assurance that whatever God has undertaken will ultimately be accomplished. There has been such abundant cause for disaster in the past which, somehow or other, has been averted. There have been a great many death-blows given to the Church which, somehow or other,

have failed of their purpose. Deadly poisonous currents have touched the life of religion; and men have said, "Surely this is the fatal hour;" but, mysteriously, some antidote has been applied, and death itself has been vanquished. Time and again, when all expectation was lost, the quivering vitals of religion have been known to become steady and strong, and good has been brought out of adversity and danger.

The conviction is beginning to pervade the world that the same hand which was at work in creation, bringing order out of chaos, bringing life out of death, bringing light out of darkness, bringing something out of nothing, has been at work in history; bringing comparative order out of the most untoward elements of strife and commotion, bringing peace out of relentless war, clearing the mildew and death damps of adversity from the face of decay, and permitting the air of freedom and hope to fan its cheeks into health again. This, at least, is the known tendency of things. To those who have the care of souls or the burden of a nation's welfare to carry in life, it brings much solid joy and rest. They may live and toil in the cheerful hope that the sun of righteousness will finally light up the dark places of the world, and all men will rejoice in the perfect adjustments of intelligence, freedom, and religious faith.

The Orient.—In the Eastern empires the human mind has never been lifted from the slavery of an iron despotism which holds all activity in abeyance, and which presents a form of government little in advance of Egypt under the Pharaohs. Start from the harbor of San Francisco, go westward till you

reach the coast of China; then, from the Northern to the Southern seas, and for five thousand miles inland lies a region of country, over the face of which might be written, “Human stability, inhuman tyranny.”

There are whole nations, whose intellectual head is the priesthood, whose animal body is the common people. A human head, an animal body! What a cheerless and sad symbol!

Since the gates of the Celestial Empire have been thrown open to the influx of sacred truth and Western thought, seeds are being planted, which are designed to germinate into a new and better life. The sun can not be said to have risen in those countries; but there are streaks of light on the mountain-tops. The flush and glow of the world’s religion is beating down upon its valleys, and illuminating its caverns of wretchedness and woe. Old prejudices are wearing away. The missionary and the sciences he takes with him are no longer suspected. The indications now are, that our Western forces will unmanacle the enslaved energies of the people, and put an end to her caste systems and her monarchies forever.

South-eastern Europe and Africa.—territories once glorious under the brilliancy of the cross, are now the most pitiable mission-fields on the face of the globe. It is one of the marvelous things in the history of Christianity, that, after the lapse of two thousand years, its birthplace should be missionary ground. Those lands which first knew the Bible, where it was first written, now ask for the Word. The very countries where the plan of redemption

was wrought out, now need a religion. The Greek Church, and the nominal followers of Christ in all Western Asia, need to be taught the nature of religion. The cross must now undertake the conquest of a land which was the seat of its ancient and most glorious victories; for the Prince of Darkness has taken possession of it like the black tents of its Bedouin Arabs. The mosque of the Moslem now desecrates the sacred hill of the devoted city. Western Asia is the cradle of the race, and the nativity of religion. It is the earth's most memorable battle-field of opinion. Now it must be reconquered in order to take part in the coming conflict in which the issues of a world are to be decided.

Southern and inland Africa present a problem for solution. Noble attempts have been made to Christianize the continent, with little or no success. Mohammedan missionaries have brought greater blessings to Africa than all Christendom combined. Islamism has gone as a civilizer to the very heart of the continent, and claims nearly all the most powerful tribes of the interior. Our African missionary movements need reconstruction, and they should be aimed at the interior. Inland exploration is now attracting the world's attention, and it is giving a valuable knowledge of regions which only a few years ago were entirely unknown. The next hundred years will make a new world of Africa.

South America, in its missions, has the advantage of not having to build on the substratum of dead races and civilizations. The native influences are more hopeful than in many other mission-fields, in

that the desperateness of Oriental thralldom does not attain among the nations of the New World. South American missionary enterprises are presenting every year more cheerful aspects.

Europe is not entirely free from the ancient order of things. The gorges of European society are not yet lit up with the ascending light. The shadows of the mediæval time have indeed been lifted. The songs of the troubadours are no longer heard. The real romance of knight-errantry is gone; and European serfdom, powerless as it has seemed for a thousand years, is rising into authority. The Reformation, which went hand in hand with a revival of letters to lift the nations into a new life, aimed at nothing less than universal conquest. That life, however, was born and nourished amid stormy times. Europe is yet standing on the limits of an age sprinkled with the blood of religious wars—an age made odious with the sanguinary horrors of the Inquisition. In the outgrowth of the blessings which the world now enjoys, time and again Christ has been crucified afresh. The rights of conscience, and the humane tolerance of these times, have been born amid many throes. For two hundred years, history has labored to give them birth like a mother reaching out in the dark and struggling with God for a life.

Germany now stands head and shoulders above her sister states of the continent in putting into practice every appliance of strength to her institutions. Her sterling intellectual culture of the last fifty years has been wrought into a thing of patriotism, and has

given glory to her banners. German society is growing up into a new life. There are intimations that it is slowly emerging from the lifeless rationalism which has been the chief item of its history for the last century. Germany is at last fully alive to the secular policies of Romanism. The old vexing and vexed politico-religious questions have often of late thrown the empire into commotion. The result is, Rome is foiled, and made to feel that there are limitations to her ecclesiastical claims.

Italy lies low under the thunders of the Vatican, even since she has learned that thunder never kills. The present political freedom of Italy is likely to be followed by a direct and powerful tendency toward religious indifference. To counteract this the American Churches are bringing a zealous missionary force to bear on the peninsula.

France, once the mistress of Europe, has now lost her prestige. For the last few years she has been paying dearly for her rank and notorious infidelity, for her rebellion against the ten commandments. The stronghold of Romanism is here. From fifty thousand pulpits are proclaimed superstitions to rival the dark ages.

Spain, poor Spain, is now a suffering invalid, unable to check the course of a long and terrible disease. The skeleton of death which began to grow in the reign of Phillip II, is now visible to every eye. Spain, to-day, illustrates how a death-blow may be struck in times of prosperity, after which prostration may be so slow that when death comes men may have forgotten the cause. For two hundred years

the gangrene of religious intolerance has been eating away at the vitals of Spain, and she is now past recovery—almost a corpse among the nations! Another victim slain! Another sad lesson wrought out by the secular ambitions of Ultramontanism!

If *England* can have Premiers to keep her Archbishops in check; if she can have Whitefields and Wesleys to rebuke her High-churchmen; if she can find American grandchildren, like Moody and Sankey, to give skepticism a contradiction when it boasts that the slumbering religious faith of England can never again be aroused; if she is able to cut loose from the fag-ends of Romanism, she will be a light in the pathway of nations.

It may be said that a new era has been fully inaugurated in European history. Yet there are dark places in it. Some of the deepest shadows are covering the face of the immediate present. As far as human eyes can see, it appears to be a slow and constant dissolution of positive faith and Christian interest. We can not assert to what extent this decline in the inner life of Christianity is to be carried. We only know that it exists as a question of awful and living interest offering itself for solution. The bitterness and the rivalry of sectarianism is working no evil to be compared with it. Modern theology, tinctured as it is so thoroughly with materialism, is sending a chill through the sundry social questions of the continent. Rationalism has secured its advocacy from many pulpits. The foes of the Church are nestling in her bosom, are warming into activity around her altar fires.

Unbelief and a tendency to be engaged in the worldly and the sensual, in fact, practical materialism in all its forms, seems to be spreading with frightful rapidity. The result is a growing indifference to the necessity of vital piety and a general neglect of eternal concerns. The life and power of godliness which carried the Church through the stormy times of the Reformation is now gone, actually gone. Will Europe retake for Christianity the place it once occupied? Will it again become Christian as it was two hundred years ago? Is the Church doomed to go down amidst overwhelming difficulties of a social and political nature, difficulties which have always come up from the unsolved religious problem of the world? Will Europe ever become once more vitally Christianized? Her institutions are pre-eminently Christian, her civilization is built on the granite rocks of the Gospel, but the power of a personal religion, to deepen and apply to good uses her best customs, is wanting. A fatal divorce between Christianity and personal freedom lies at the foundation of the antagonism which shake European society. To obey Jesus Christ, without becoming the slave of a priesthood, is the principal point. Clearer and more definite boundaries between the civil and the ecclesiastical are needed. A free Church is greatly in demand, yet it is not practicable. To throw the Churches upon their own resources, for the present, would be profoundly revolutionary, and would, doubtless, be followed by a disastrous letting down of faith and confidence for the future. At the same time, it is one of those dreadful measures which might arouse and quicken into life.

American society, so easily changed in its customs, bears no resemblance to the settled methods and ways of transatlantic countries. Opinions do not take such a deep hold on the character here as there. Venerated customs, to which the people have been conformed for thousands of years, however unequal they may be to modern exigencies, are not easily overthrown. That honored belief in the subordination of the civil to the sacerdotal, claims the homage of so great a number of European inhabitants that the true relations of Church and State could not be brought about short of a physical conflict. Yet this would be better than the stagnation of all enterprises, and the hopelessness of the conflicts which the present state of things portends.

AMERICA.

Historic Forces.—In the busy whirl of our national life it is a wise thing to stop and take observation. The mariner may be sailing along swiftly and pleasantly, yet he watches the compass, he watches the stars, those things which change not. To be sure of the port, he determines his position, he finds out where he is now. He may have kept his course unchanged, yet he knows how an untoward wave may change that course, and how, almost imperceptibly, the wind may drive him away.

As the child must have a mother, so the present, in a measure, is the offspring of the past. Many principles and opinions which are being propagated now, in this country, found their inception and nurture in colonial soil. There has been occasion to present

already, in this volume, the resemblance between natural bodies and bodies politic. The characteristic traits of infancy and childhood are seen in old age. Early impressions and beliefs stamp their influence on the whole after-existence. The primary elements of our social and religious life have in them something of the genesis and early development of the country. It is a marvel that out of such heterogeneous elements there should come the comparative unity we enjoy. Infinite wisdom has certainly been at work reconciling the antagonisms.

Two things are to be deplored in the early settlement of the American continent—the rigid intolerance of Puritanism, and a religion of State patronage in the Jamestown type of colonies. These relics of religious tyranny had followed the colonists from the old world, and for a time there was every prospect that they would engraft themselves into the civil and religious history of the country. In this the colonies would only have been true in thought and sentiment to European life. But soon after the settlements were made permanent, mysteriously, affairs were found reshaping themselves. The bitter, persecuting spirit of New England was modified before long, and the rights of conscience soon gained the supremacy. From thenceforward the freest development of religious thought and experience was recognized as a primary human right.

After this transforming work was done, two religious theories were left at work like leaven in colonial history; and the subordination of one to the growth of the other has given us our glory and made

Europe envious. One element advocated the crown and its privileges; the other contended for popular rights. One element was organized before it left the old country; the other had its foundation in a simple compact. One element had a religion of forms and ceremonies, and an imposing ritual; the other had its only basis in the Bible. One element caused the battle of liberty and conscience to be partially fought over again on these shores; the other brought with it the rich and immortal qualities of the Reformation, the precious germ of human rights, and the true relation of the civil government to religion. One element came with the "propagation of the Gospel" written in its charters, and lived to learn that the spread of Christ's kingdom under civil jurisdiction was a disgraceful failure. The other came to America under the ban of the same failures in Europe, and wrought out the type of our civilization; and it has a rich fruit for its reward.

The germs of religion were so deeply planted in federal soil that they could be safely trusted to spontaneous resources for cultivation. The lack of State support in those colonies which adopted the voluntary system so early in the history of the country was found to be a hinderance of less moment than the segregated nature of religious forces. For a time there was little connectional interest in the work of evangelism. These sectional barriers, producing a spirit of offishness, were not taken away until the revival of Whitefield, with an overwhelming tide, swept all influences into a soul of unity, and brought the people for the first time under the power of one thought and one impulse.

From thenceforward there was an American people, held by voluntary bonds, trusting in Christ, and perpetuating the truths of the Bible under the impulse of private conviction. Every great religious awakening which has swept over the land, from Whitefield's time to our own, has operated like a welding force in our historic life. These great movements, taken together, reveal a depth of Christian sentiment to which Europe has been a stranger since the outburst of the Reformation. Let us pray that this hopeful element may still pervade our national life, and that it may mold and move society in the future. But to make an estimate altogether from this cheerful stand-point would, perhaps, lead to a mistaken notion of our present religious condition.

In the intervals of revivals in this country, religion has been at a very low ebb,—so low that the contagion of error has spread rapidly. Paine and Cooper and Jefferson are representatives of a factor in American thought. The student of our history remembers with sadness the bold inroads of Unitarianism and Universalism in the year 1800, as a reaction against the gloomy scholastic theology of the period. Twenty-four years afterwards, the communistic socialism of Robert Owen made its appearance, with its degeneracies of Fourierism, and Free-loveism, and the diabolical spiritualism of the present day. The flood tides of German philosophy began their devastations in the year 1840, and the threatenings now indicate that German rationalism will repeat itself on these shores. The preparative work is being successfully done in many parts. Thousands

of the simple and the credulous are being deluded by those apostles of materialism calling themselves phrenologists. The increase of wealth, the advance of culture, the tendency to worldliness, together with the evident weakening of religious faith in many localities, are powerful conditions for the growth of a rationalism as cold and cheerless as the grave.

Our country in many respects presents a receptive soil for these foreign forces of Antichrist. Of ourselves we have never cursed humanity with a new form of infidelity; but we have gone off into superstitions, and we are given to aping Europe in sceptical thought.

The Present.—If we are living in the house whose foundations our fathers laid, whose walls they saw started, let us see, if we can, how this solid work stands related to our present improvement and finish. We are now on the transition ground from a period of stern religious faith which is always inclined to force the will of others into conformity, into a period celebrated for its application of a boundless liberty of thought, for its humanity and toleration; whose bright side is in its free and clear views of religion, and whose dark side consists in the dangerous tendencies of an easy faith. Times of persecution for opinion's sake, and times of early national development, have been noted for deep religious feeling. In our pioneer life faith was strong, and an undoubted precedence was given to the Word of God and spiritual things. All undertakings were linked in some

way or other with heaven. In the fading away of these frontier elements; in the increased comfort of our surroundings; in our favorable earthly situations; in the glamour of prosperity, spiritual indifference is likely to overtake our people, and without striving against religion we are apt to become forgetful of its claims.

The next step is into a lifeless formalism and an absolute unconcern. When one of these periods of torpid religious life arrives, thought begins to make demands, and reason begins to make advances in a way calculated to injure faith. Christianity comes to be recognized as a social force rather than a regenerating power.

With all the tendency toward religious indifference in these times, when taken in connection with other things, we can not desire to return to the good old days. We should seek rather to be free from the base element of the tides which move us. Modern culture, with its mighty influences in the various departments of life, can no more be hindered than the resistless forces of Niagara. Our only way is to eliminate the evils. Europe, with all its skepticism and slumbering religious fires, can not wish for the golden age of Luther. Neither can we dream of exchanging what we enjoy now for the condition of things fifty years ago. The stream of life never flows backward, never stops. It can only be controlled as it goes, changed without stopping.

There are many things leading the spiritual life of the American people toward evil channels.

Religion nearly always becomes identified in the

minds of men with the practices of the Churches, with their obnoxious tenets, and with the daily lives of hypocrites. In a failure of distinctions, the truth is thrown overboard, out of repugnance to these errors and imperfections. Christianity has never been able to present untarnished truth in practice. Private Christian life is generally below its immediate possibilities.

There is a large class in every community making these discrepancies of life and doctrine the fortress from which to drive away all obligation and serious concern. Christian life is spoken of as affording but few examples, and the whole of religion is depreciated and shunned. Thus it is often the case that undoubted Christian principle is robbed of its rightful influence. From this source men learn the arts of sacred satire. They are bold to seek the indulgence of a silly wit, at the expense of Bible truth. They purchase amusement at the expense of false renderings of Scripture texts. They offer puns on the most solemn doctrines of revelation. This degrades sacred truth, in that it begets a familiar disrespect, and a carelessness with reference to its teachings. Professors take the infection; and at last it produces the fruit of a low religious life, and all serious thought and inward conflict is bartered for that which is cheapest and easiest attained.

There is now no lack of reform in private Christian life, as well as in society. The advocacy of higher attainments in grace is being rewarded with success in many parts of the country. Some phases of this movement, however, have degenerated into

sentimentalism. We are reminded of the perversions of European pietism in the eighteenth century.

There is a distinction between religious feeling and sentimentalism. Tenderness is healthy and natural; sentimentalism is artificial and morbid, vain and spoiled. It tries to hide a want of depth in moral energy beneath a lauded and forced expression of feeling. Strong and manly natures are by this means thrown into the counter tendency of the intellect and of doubt.

The Church life of this country holds an intimate relation to its literature. Man's faculties are complicated. His needs are manifold. In mastering the resources which supply his physical wants, he is apt to reshape all the relations of his many-sided nature. He can not gratify his purely intellectual wants without touching the moving-springs of his soul. The various resources of man's earthly happiness are not segregated. In the unbounded stores of pure and high-toned literature, he gathers strength for Christian progress, he develops the spirit-qualities of his being, and becomes a better and a wiser man.

This is the world's golden age of letters. So far as it is utilized for the truth, it is man's richest temporal boon. When it is subordinated to passion, it is his greatest curse. • While the sacred literature of this country, comprising books and magazines and periodicals, is vast in the aggregate, wielding an influence next to the pulpit, yet its anti-Christian and immoral phases are positively alarming.

There appears to be a growing distaste for solidity of thought. Our feverish young bloods are pampering

a vicious taste in the low and passionate literature of the day, beyond which there is nothing more potent to sear the conscience and to darken the soul, to become the victim of the appetites and to prepare it for the perpetration of crime.

A young girl takes up a dime novel. She reads of some heroine of supernatural qualities, who was "true to the last;" who ran hair-breadth escapes; who was heedless of the counsels of friends, parents, and many other sensible people; and fled, like a bird out of Egypt, to cleave to some hero with a marble hand. Then she feels an emulation to go and do likewise.

But the reading is for an insight into human nature. The natures portrayed in sensational literature contain the elements of all misery and crime. In most novels the plot ends, the interest is lost, at the marriage altar. It is well that this is so. Characters of the ordinary novel type would not look well on the rich canvas of domestic life. The nursery-home of virtue and piety is too pure an atmosphere for the lustful glamour that must be thrown around the novel figure to make it attractive.

The vicious literature of America is the primary cause of more sorrow than any other single influence. It is Satan's deepest, darkest, surest snare. It often puts on the livery of religion, and stands, Janus-faced, to decoy and entrap souls for drunken graves and feasts of licentiousness. It awakens and calls out the animalism of life, until it is stronger than all the moral power of the soul. It pictures the heroic and amorous under such relations as to

fire the brain with all that is false and overstrained. When disappointment comes, it offers no balm. It leaves its victims to pursue lives of drunkenness and deathless infamy. Its ultimate is the very depth of despair. According to the enormity of this evil should be the immensity of Christian labor.

In the effects of these radical antagonisms to the Christian faith there are appearances of disintegration. They have already reached an importance which it is unwise to disregard. No genius of intuition will ever check their force. The wisest counselors are needed to invoke the spirit of the times, and bring out agencies by which these dangerous streams can be met by counter currents, until they shall be sealed in their fountains.

In the attempted adjustment of Christian methods there has been taken away much that had become distasteful. There has been an effort to take all the remaining gloom out of religion, and array it in living adornments. In all Christian work method has come to be considered a thing of expediency, only bounded by the great laws of right, and it is susceptible of the most radical changes. This has become a necessity in the instrumentalities of religious labor. Such has been the development of our activities in the last few decades, such has been the speed of our growth in temporal progress and new and startling ideas, that the old order of things has neither had time to assimilate itself nor die before the new has offered its encroachments. There is now a kind of religious and social conflict going on in this country between the old and the new,—a conflict between

parents and children, between representatives of the generation past and candidates for the generation to come, a conflict between the staid notions and whims of old age, and the follies and extravagances of youth. The voice of reason and prudence calls for frequent changes when it has to do with this seeming hybrid social state. This call is answered and measurably illustrated by a remarkable change in the tone of the pulpit. The constant old-time themes of sin, depravity, repentance, regeneration, and atonement, are interspersed with living discourses on the general duties of man, with discussions on the philosophy of Christian morals. Argument is taking the place of exhortation. The finer distinctions of conscience are calling for exposition. Polemical theology is giving way before a legitimate utilitarianism.

Whoever is not disposed to accommodate himself to this new order must stand out as a venerable antiquary. We offer the precaution that this practical philanthropy be not lauded too highly, for its tendencies are toward indifference, toward cultivating and refining the feelings into an ideal affection and a superficial labor. The old landmarks are the sources of that piety which manifests itself in strong efforts and constant sacrifices for humanity.

While there are shadows in our religious sky which can not fail to bring their disparagements, serious and thoughtful minds are predicting near and glorious triumphs for Christianity in the fact that the unifying forces of Protestantism are becoming stronger and more numerous. The Churches are beginning to signify a willingness to shake hands over the chasm

of their differences. The blood-marked battle-grounds of the past are now being brought under the richest cultivation, and with promises of an abundant yield. Only now and then some broken missile reveals itself, like the harmless traces of an Indian encampment. Here and there are the remains of breastworks; now and then a small field-piece, rusted with neglect, nothing more.

The unyielding and literal orthodoxy of fifty years ago taught the American spirit to think; it sharpened the conceptions in the definition and proof of doctrine; but it occasioned many revolts, and degenerated into endless quarrels, and very often into a miserable religious pettifoggery. These old-time phases of our religious history are being superseded by broader views of Christian life, and a charity which is bringing a ready co-operation and a community of interests. The people are learning to distinguish between the pure flame of evangelical zeal and the wild-fire of dogmatism. The genius of Protestantism is rising superior to that endless controversy which does no good. That deathless struggle to reach concord by theological wrangling, and preserve the life of religion in statements and formulas, has been given over by the great majority. That fierce theology which damns and predestinates because of minor doctrines is being buried without hope of resurrection. Occasionally we find believers who are ominously impressed that the foundations of religion are giving way in this change; but wherever the more charitable relations are taking hold on the hearts of the people, in the place of polemical

theology, society moves, if not in a purer, certainly in a freer, religious atmosphere.

It has been in the sphere of Christian thought as in the progress of jurisprudence. Starting with the venerable year-books of English history, with their pedantry and their nice distinctions, the common law has grown out of them, as from a bundle of specialties, into a broad basis of principles; into more enlarged and liberal interpretations; into a systematic accuracy by rejecting anomalies and deciding cases under the general test of principles. The pursuit of jurisprudence now embraces those enlightened and extensive researches which go to make up the finished scholar or the devoted patriot, or which shed a benign luster around the brow of the statesman. The student of the law is now furnished with the resources of knowledge and eloquence to advocate a pure morality, to defend and protect the liberty of the citizen, to expound the doctrines which shall insure the perpetuity of the nation, to drive back error and check the march of anarchy, even at the expense of fame and friendship. So in the field of theology. The age of quaint and curious argument, of metaphysical problems, of scholastic subtleties, has gone by. The old logical and crafty hair-splitting has been exchanged for the more useful inductions of common sense. Never was the desire for unity so universal and so real. Mutual recognition was never before made a matter of conscience; never before did it come up from the great soul-life of religion. It is, furthermore, being made vital in the great forces which are now welding the Christian sentiment of the country.

There is now almost universal negotiation for union among kindred branches of the Christian Church. The reunion of the old and new school of American Presbyterianism is a realized demonstration. There are intimations that the Presbyterian world will soon be one. The Methodists of Canada are being brought together. Fraternal relations have now been established between Northern and Southern Methodism. Without some unforeseen hinderance, the time is not remote when there shall be an organic adjustment and union of all, or nearly all, branches of Methodism in the United States. A striking indication of the new tendency toward Christian fellowship is seen in the British and American Episcopalian movement. The free Churches in Europe are also being brought nearer together every year.

The cure of social evils, a work which depends largely on members of the Churches in this country, is bringing them into personal intercourse, making them acquainted with each other's religious methods, banishing exclusiveness and building up a community of feeling. Union revival efforts, now taking place in many cities, towns, and villages, during the Winter season, sometimes under the labors and direction of lay evangelists; at other times through the plans of the ministry, are bringing the people on a common basis of belief and taking away all barriers. The Sunday-school Union and the American Bible Society have been powerful aids in promoting a better state of feeling among denominations. The International Sunday-school Lesson System has grown up like a giant-force to bind and assimilate our American Sun-

day-schools, until they are swayed by one thought and impulse. It puts in the reach of all classes, at a nominal expense, the best opinions of history on passages of Scripture. It enables Sabbath-school workers to become mutual helpers. It calls the attention of the world to Bible truth. It utilizes the secular press in religious teaching. It gives inspiration to religious thought all over the world. The system extends over nearly all Europe, to India, Burmah, and China, to the Fiji Islands, Sandwich Islands, and to the Indians; and it labors to bring them all under the unity of the faith. It is concentrating the best talent of the Church on Biblical exegesis. It develops the capability of the Church, and secures for it a host of trained instructors for the future.

The Young Men's Christian Association, comprising a vast army from all denominations, is bringing the age under obligations. The divine mind generally finds a supply for the world's great needs. When it became necessary that America should be discovered, Columbus was brought up as God's instrument. When it became needful that the art of printing should supersede the scribe, there was a love-sick swain of Europe to hit on the first suggestion. It was not until the Church was about to become tragical in corruption that Martin Luther was born. When the world of science was to feel the throbs of a revolution, Newton saw the apple fall. When Christendom's children were to be taught the Gospel, Robert Raikes was found giving the pattern in 39 Catherine Street, Gloucester. When the world was in danger of losing its apostolic fire, Wesley

and Whitefield thundered over the walls of the Church of England, and shouted a pure Gospel to the peasants and among the colliers. Among these timely and providential needs are the unifying forces just mentioned. They are calculated to shape the religious element of modern civilization.

Akin to these, yet of greater significance to the general Church, is the Evangelical Alliance; whose moral force in the world of religious thought is beyond all estimate. It was formally organized in 1846; and its conferences were held successively in London in 1851, in Paris in 1855, in Berlin in 1857, in Geneva in 1861, in Amsterdam in 1867, in New York in 1872. It has living branches in all the principal cities of the world. Its object is to realize to its members, and to exhibit to others, that a living and everlasting union binds all true believers together in the fellowship of the Church of Christ.

The last conference in New York awakened a greater interest in Christian union in this country than was ever before known. It touched a latent chord in popular sentiment, which went vibrating the length and breadth of the land. In this direction, the dawning of a brighter day is near at hand. Gray lines of light are coming over the horizon. It is for Christian people to keep the vigils of the night. The evidences are at hand by which we shall be assured of the ultimate success of religion, by which the nation will become jubilant with thanksgiving and praise.

In close connection with this great tendency, as it partakes in the religious condition of the country, are the discussions of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

NATURE OF PROTESTANTISM, AND ITS NEEDS.

ONE of the distinctive features of Protestant Christianity is its division into sects. Modern Church life, to the casual observer, appears greatly disintegrated. As roots of evil sometimes draw sustenance and vitality from the soil of virtue, subordinating that which in itself is good, so the present condition of things is the outgrowth of subordinated free thought. Sectarianism, in itself, is an evil. It limits the progress of the kingdom. It will not be known when Christian thought and practice shall have ascended to their just claims on the heart of man, or when the religious world shall have learned to economize its forces. Yet the most hopeful element of the Christian system is the very thing which has been the occasion of these endless diversities of form and doctrine. The discord which we see around us, whatever ill it may have wrought, is a grand testimony that Protestant Christianity has not been indifferent to the truth.

In a study of the relative effects of the religions of the world on the human character, Christianity is known to present vital distinctions from all others, in the extent of its influence on the individual life,

and in its power over society. The spirit of paganism has always been indulgent. It has never taken a deep and lasting hold on the heart. Its principles have always floated loosely in the popular mind. It has never affected the morals of the people to any extent. The worship of strange gods could be admitted in its temples, for these gods themselves were often supposed to be in conflict. Paganism never quarreled about doctrine, because it had no fixed belief. When there is a patroness for every art and a presiding god for every pursuit, where every grotto is made sacred in the presence of nymphs and sirens, where there are mystic whisperings for every household, there could be no wrangling about belief, no persecution for opinion's sake. Mutual indulgence has marked the history of all mythologic religions. The Christian religion has always been zealous for the truth. It contends for the same system of duties, for the same great central doctrines. The fulfillment of its prophecies will bring all men to the same level, will subordinate all theories to the same infallible revelation. It tampers with no sin, compromises no principle.

When such a system as this engrosses the mind, it is not strange that there should be martyrs to its belief, and that persecution should find her unconquerable victims. Such earnestness, pervading the whole life of Christianity, has all along stimulated inquiry to the deepest investigations, leading to the most diverse conclusions. While such variations of Christian belief as find their occasion in the earnestness with which revealed truth has always inspired

the heart are not to be deplored, but rather commended as expressions of the deepest devotion, yet we can not look upon the extremes of fanaticism into which the Church has been led without many regrets.

The bitterness of theological dispute has passed into a by-word. There are yet those among us who believe that dissent from their peculiar views is worse than are violations of the moral law. There are those who would rather know that a man is a good disputant than to know that he kept the commandments. The question is not, "Are you a Good Samaritan?" but, "Can you argue Scripture?"

We confess, with shame, that men have thus often put God's best and greatest gift to an evil use. If the apostles or early fathers were to rise up among us they would perhaps need instructions on some of the questions now dividing our people. What would Paul think to attend one of our country school-house debates, where preachers of the same Gospel meet, like opposing armies on a field of battle, to bring their animosities to an issue; where they meet under all the estrangement and jealousy likely to be engendered in the face of an obstinate controversy; where they meet in the excitement of a struggle to triumph over an adversary, rather than to investigate and dispassionately make plain the truth; where they meet, each urged on by a host of intractable followers who have exaggerated notions of the importance of the question, and who often manifest an anxiety to see their hero's opponent goaded to exasperation; where they meet to wrangle over the very shreds of doctrine, contending as if heaven or hell hung on the

issue, now flushing up, now turning pale under the worst passions of bullyism? Paul would certainly proclaim anew the “unknown God.” Shame on such performances and the men who engage in them! If they were ever called to preach “Jesus and the resurrection,” they run risks of losing their commissions in descending to a low and miserable controversy, where the only result will be irreparable harm to the progress of the Gospel.

The spirit which leads men to this theological prize-fighting is akin to that of the braggadocio, and deserves the denunciation of all Christian people. Wherever we find these so-called students of polemical divinity, they feed on the air and the empty notions of an age gone by. They waste their time in tying and untying Gordian knots which a true soldier would settle with a single stroke of his sword, ignoring its trifling mystery. A man may spend his time thinking about nothing; he may trouble himself and all around him about nothing, affect to be very wise and learned about nothing, and go down to his grave only having added fire to the feuds of life.

There was a time when the wearing of veils shook the New England colonies to their foundations. The saints of the Middle Ages discussed the questions, “How many angels may dance on the point of a cambric needle without jostling against each other?” “Do the angels, in going from one place to another, pass through the intermediate space?” The school of Gamaliel discussed the profound problems as to whether we should say grace once or three times at the table; or whether an animal wounded in the lip

should be offered as a sacrifice. Men have descended to great depths of credulity when they can look each other in the face and seriously discuss the difference between nothing and its next-door neighbor. Theological rancor leads to all such insane and trifling gibberish. If the divine Spirit be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil and be careful; and thus, being ruled by its dictates, we will find more peace of conscience and more skill in the Scriptures than by all the angry disputation of a life-time.

If a man is led by the Spirit, he will know better than to throw away his happiness and his hopes of heaven for that which profits nothing after it is gained. Truth does not require the advocacy of unholy influences, either for its defense or its advancement. That fierce zeal for opinion's sake, which magnifies itself into essential faith, is now confined to those hot-headed gospelers who have supposed themselves the aristocracy of God, but who have never been wise enough to know why they were born; who may never know that they belong to a mediocre class of men; and yet may never be able to perpetuate any extensive influence. The old theology of disputation has outlived its day. That formal orthodoxy which actually threatened to ossify the revealed doctrines in the beginning of this century has been mostly overthrown, and more attention is being given to the industries of Christian life. Less stress is being laid on peculiarities of doctrine than ever before. The sharp and rugged forms of dogmatism are not so much drawn in the general pulpit. There is an emulation to meet on the common ground of truth.

Modern culture may not be deepening the religious zeal of the people, but it is bringing into activity a humane and charitable spirit which is gradually placing in the background all rigid and binding forms.

The cardinal doctrines of Scripture are almost universally believed. The first six Ecumenical Councils expressed for the Protestant world its belief concerning the nature of God and the person of Jesus Christ. All believe in the perfect divinity and perfect humanity of Christ. He is recognized as our only Savior. All believe in the doctrines of the Atonement, the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and future rewards and punishments. They have been handed down from apostolic times with but little controversy. This unity of belief is strong enough to prevent disintegration in the diversity and conflict of subordinate doctrines. This focalizing of essential truth should overbalance all separating forces, and lift the Church from the dust and keep it moving. Struggle and conflict for ascendancy may be toned down in its asperities by recognizing the claims of Christian courtesy.

The work of Protestantism for the future is not only against sin from without, but for the adjustment of internal differences. Now, since we are in less danger of being scorched by red-hot polemical rhetoric; since theological training is laid in principles rather than in dogmas; since the tendency is to bind up the open wounds of schism with bands of charity; since even the deep-laid notion of sacramental exclusiveness is finding fewer advocates every year, and is

about to give way before a love stronger than has yet ruled the world, it becomes an urgent duty to deepen Protestantism in the national consciousness. The officialism of sects should accommodate itself to this spiritual striving after unity, and so bring the varied forces of American Church-life together, that its differences in customs and doctrines and methods may not hinder, but work out the divine ideal.

Reasons for Christian Unity.—The Creator has invested man with capabilities of endless progression. Development is the watchword of the race. One step is only gained that another may be taken. There is no stopping-place, no absolute perfectibility on earth, none in heaven among God's creatures. It is said, by a great thinker, that one of the fruits of Christianity is the awakening of a spirit of discontent. Man's religious aspirations are to lead him higher. To be satisfied with the present is to stop short and defeat the divine purpose. Now that the great ground-truths of tolerance are standing unshaken under the modern superstructure of free thought, now that freedom of religious opinion and conscience has been gladly accorded to all men, the next object is to prevent the endless forms into which freedom shapes itself from doing harm.

Protestantism has been three hundred years in asserting its supremacy over Rome. The conflict has been so relentless that little time and attention has been devoted to its internal structure. Now that the victory is gained in evangelistic labor, the body ought to be put together, and its inherent weakness cured.

The present position of religious life is not assured unless it is made the basis of higher attainment. If there is rejoicing over the present favorable surroundings of Zion, it should be remembered that we are far below Christ's ideal. The application of the revealed word to human wants is progressive in its nature. It is a work in which the individual may contribute to its final triumph. As the present proud state of astronomy has grown up from the rude notions of the astrologer, through Copernicus and Kepler and Newton, so the adaptation of divine truth is continually reaching higher results, bringing into operation new methods, constantly awakening more potent impulses, reaching toward the ideal that all shall "come in the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

In the first place, the unity of all believers is based on the union which exists between Christ and his people. This union is a revealed fact. It lies beyond all comprehension, and contains a great mystery. The fact itself is as evident as any doctrine of Scripture. Yet it is a thing into which the angels desire to look. We were in him before the foundation of the world, just as we were in Adam before we were born. This idea antedates all that is real in human comprehension, and is a theme almost too holy for mortals. Christ imparts the Spirit to his people, and by the great chain of this Spirit they are one. This union is illustrated in the Word, by the vine and its branches, and by the relations between the head and the body, and by the marriage relation.

The mystic union between husband and wife, so mysterious in its nature, so sacred in its character, will not submit itself to the cold analyzing of the mind. The strongest bond is an unconscious bond, a feeling, a sentiment, a something that was never spoken of, which is depended on without ever becoming the theme of thought. The Church is the bride of Christ. All believers, constituting the Church invisible, have, *together*, a common life in Christ, just as the infant rests in Christ unconsciously. It is deeper than all conception, below all feeling. What a high and holy theme!

There is another bond of union, which is clear and evident as the noonday, and with which we may come into the fullest sympathy. It is the living, conscious bond of faith in Christ, as our Savior from sin and its woeful consequences. It is only when the soul first calls Jesus Lord that it becomes assured of its relationship with him. Believers, therefore, are members of Christ's mystical body, which is the Church. Unity in Christ is based on this spirit. Hence the proclamation, "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." It is not intended that the individual shall be magnified in such a way as to destroy the aggregate. The bricks are in a manner useless, unless they form the walls of the building.

The communion of saints is necessary to the body of Christ. Christian fellowship is an indispensable factor in the redemption of the world. If it is ever realized, it must be based on the common purposes of the race, and on fellowship with Christ.

A Christian brotherhood is the highest earthly

state. The Millennial Age, with all its glory, is nothing more than a brotherhood of interests, a brotherhood of aims, of hopes, of desires, a brotherhood of plans and of promises, of wants and of joys, and, above all, a brotherhood of hearts, animated by the same sympathies of being, thrilled with the same immortal impulses, rejoicing in the same glorious destiny.

The unity of the Church is not a thing to be created. The oneness of Christ's kingdom is not a fact to be instituted. It already exists. God's people are one. Whoever partakes of Christ's life is a Christian, and is a brother to every other partaker on earth. The invisible Church of God constitutes one family. The requirement is, that its members shall live in harmony with it, shall recognize it by their conduct.

Nature of Christian Unity.—Protestantism is not a failure because of its different methods of administration. The Holy Scriptures are not explicit on forms of worship. No method of Church government is clearly delineated. We are given great freedom in these matters to adapt all forms and methods of work on grounds of expediency. Denominational distinctions are consistent with Christian unity. The necessities of constitutional liberty do not conflict with even the highest ideal phases of militant Churchship. The unbounded opportunities of error to propagate itself, now offered in every direction, are not chargeable with half such disaster as the suppression of it by ecclesiastical force. Since men have been allowed to

think freely, and utter their sentiments without restraint, there have been fewer fatal divisions in Christendom than ever before.

There could be no sadder record of modern Church history than a suppression of denominations by a formal union. We need a policy, but no general polity. We could not make use of a written code, or a system of organic laws, if they were presented ever so perfect. The Churches of America are not in need of union so much as unity. To undertake to shape the religious opinions of the country by ecclesiastical canon would be called rash and premature. Faith can not be cut and altered like a garment, to suit the prevailing fashion. The growth of opinion, to take upon itself higher forms, is necessarily slow, and an attempt to coerce it into greater speed is always fatal. The fate of Christianity does not depend on absolute agreement in doctrinal formulas; nor does it depend on the ascendancy of any sect, to overshadow all others, and awe them into conformity. These things the Gospel does not need or require.

There are immaterial forces which come into play when they are planted in man's nature by the power of Christ, which will not permit themselves to be made tangible, nor even to be comprehended, except so far as an energy can be understood; and yet they, silently and unperceived, lead to results beyond the dreams of the utilitarian. Perpetuity to the Gospel is given through the organism of the Church; yet this organism does not thereby become the pledge of its security and life. The existence of the Church

is insured by the life-giving, yet impalpable forces which accompany the truth. The many forms which it takes upon itself may exist as distinguished from its vital unity. It is useless to expect from without that which can only arise from within. Wherever the germs of the Gospel are planted, though the providence of God should scatter them in the winds of heaven, if they find a receptive soil, they will spring up and grow, and constitute a true Church. This will be, under whatever reasonable methods they may appear, though they may not have the remotest organic connection with the infallible successors of St. Peter, or with the traditional apostolic line.

The Church is the occasion of the religion of Christ, the receptacle and ordinary dispenser of its spiritual forces, the vitalized monument of the world's religious life; but, abstractly, it has never had delegated to it any of the miraculous graces. No priesthood or ministry has ever suborned the sacred vestments of Jehovah. The religion of the Lord Jesus is equipped with its own authority, and does not at all times wait for the recognition of orders. Hence unity does not depend on any formal sanction, but comes from the depths of a sublime harmony within. The Holy Ghost comes direct from God, out of heaven, to give the inspiration of unity to the general Church. It comes at right-angles in all the earth,—not by way of Europe, or the Apostolic See. The Biblical idea of a Church is, that believers every-where are a band of brethren, children of the same Father, equally sharing the parental blessings,

united by the same spirit, having Christ for their elder brother; thus being one in life, one in faith, one in love, they call each other brethren, and are willing to bear each other's burdens. This is the brotherhood of heaven's kingdom, the mystical body of Christ. Christian unity must bear testimony to the world that it is real. It must be the product of an unearthly power, whose bold and definite outlines are embodied in the prayer of him who said: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are, . . . that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

Methods Promoting Unity.—What the precise outward nature of that unity shall be, in order to fulfill the sublime prayer of Christ, we are unable to know. Its spiritual significance is more clearly discerned. Into this deeper meaning we hope to grow, leaving the outer form to shape itself to suit all newly appearing exigencies. If the inner life is right we can safely rely on circumstances for organic adjustment.

The finer lines of theory are always difficult to keep in mind, more difficult to impress on the heart. There have always been hinderances in the way of

the definite and practical impression of that truth which must necessarily be drawn from the soul's holiest oratory. There is a love which goes hand in hand with a faith that refuses to be moved; a love which may be active in winning others to its tenets, but never stoops to compel the belief of others; a love strong enough to endure persecution, and yet would scorn to persecute; a love which goes beyond toleration, and never lays offensive hands on that which is sacred to others; a love which opposes that which it thinks to be wrong in such a spirit, and with such feelings of tenderness that an opponent may be won by its candor; a love which unites the highest wisdom with the harmlessness of the dove, which triumphs over false zeal and avoids indifference.

There is a tie of union for the Christian world like that which binds the members of the family together,—the bond of a common origin and parentage, and a common affection from natural relationship. For each believer and partaker of the divine nature to realize the common source of being, and the common interest in Christ, with the destiny it secures, is sufficient in itself to gladden the world with a perfect fellowship.

There should be no attempt or desire to do away with denominational lines, for the results of such a procedure could not now be known. It is yet safest to stay within old lines, being agreed that there is nothing to warrant their continuance. As yet, there can be no formulated settling of doctrine; only a compact without diplomacy, without concessions or appeals to precedence. Questions of method will be

a factor in Christian work till the end of time. Method has a rightful expediency for its guide. The irresistible attractions of a common aim and purpose will harmonize and make consistent all reasonable agencies of religious labor.

We are constituted differently. We have differences of taste, of sympathy, of personal peculiarities, arising from causes right in themselves. Our traits of character are as numerous as the stars in heaven. Our personal qualities are as varied as the days that roll over our heads. Our individual peculiarities are as infinite as are the resources of the God who gave them. Man's power in society and in the Christian life consists, in a great measure, in the multitude of his affinities.

The endless variety of religious feeling has always found its expression in the diversified forms of Protestant faith. Only when this diversity of feeling is intensified into division and separation does it produce harm. We can not hope for conformity in religious thought any more than we can bring all men to our notions in other matters. The Churches are to grow up into unity under the appliance of welding forces.

The great law of the spirit is, that Christians are subject to each other as brethren, and through this subjective relation they strive for the normal condition of unity. Efforts in this direction are always revealing themselves, though adverse circumstances may prevent the fullest desires. The spirit of religion is not disintegrating. The difficulty is in the fact that men mistake the spirit's teaching. Ecumen-

ical Councils have been invoked in all ages. Codes have been attempted to which all minor divisions were expected to bow. Strife for external unity, before the internal life was prepared for it, has given rise to much heresy. This blunder has hindered the true expression of Church-life, and has checked the growth of religious reform; but it has never robbed the Christian system of the *tendency* to consolidation. Wherever the hinderances are removed the Spirit will assert itself as naturally as the rain-drops mingle to form the brooklet and the stream.

Man's *spiritual* life is the principal thing; though it is often recognized as a kind of negative fact, as if the inner nature was only found at the end of the world of sense, and that its full and perfect development depended on keeping the outward conditions in order. The mistake is in acting as if the spiritual depended on the earthly. The upper wall has been simply adjusted when the foundations were unsteady. To whitewash the sepulcher is not to bring life out of death and decay. Church history reveals this mode of procedure to be one of the consummate strokes of depravity. Its only remedial is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ecclesiastical law may coerce into conformity, may exert a vast physical potency, cold and cheerless as the grave, but the warm glow of love has never been known to keep it company. One of the saddest errors of Church history has been to keep men united externally when there was internal variance,—a policy which has always been followed by hypocrisy and indifference to the truth on one hand, and persecution on the other. The organic

union of the Churches of this country, at present, would likely drive the life out of truth, would lead to stagnation, and, through it, to great corruption. Relative to this question, the liftings of Christian thought, in the last ten decades, have produced wonderful changes. For long periods of time the Church has been found trying to shape Christian work into an automaton, producing in every exertion about the same result.

This machinery of ecclesiasticism has become so rusty and worn that it is now abandoned, and pronounced of no value, except to sway ignorance. The soul of man, with its impulses, can not be placed under the control of machinery. The endless variety with which God has adorned both life and nature condemns with a high hand the ghastly features of *uniformity*.

The intelligent world is also losing faith, not only in the possibility, but in the desirableness of *unanimity*, or oneness of thinking. Unanimity in doctrinal belief has always been the companion of ignorance. It is no misfortune that differences of race and culture and surroundings lead to variety of thought. It is not a very deep, but a very important, lesson, to learn how the supposed differences around us may be recognized as the individualizing of the same great truths. No one is sorry that we can not believe alike. Independent thinking gives richness to religious thought, and calls out the many-sided phases of Christian experience. Unanimity is a blessing only when it is voluntary. Above all, are we to deplore that insolent hushing of opinion

by fear of bulls and anathemas, and that hardly less successful method of moral browbeating which says to the initiate, "Eat what is set before you—believe what is taught you—ask no questions." Men who love the freedom of their own minds as they love their lives, and are conscious of its responsibility, are banished from God's altars by these methods. In a failure to distinguish between that which is natural and that which is the result of depravity, we attempt to bind that which God has left free, except by the restraints of conscience. Differences of thought and temperament and feeling are put down as stubborn contradictions, as unmistakable marks of the lost paradise.

It is hardly expected that any one shall be susceptible of other feelings than his own, but it is reasonable to ask a charity which will lay down all deadly hostility to that which other thoughts and feelings may produce. An elevated taste and perception is needed, which will give a charm to our variety of thought, and drive away the repulsiveness of our peculiar views. A culture is needed which is thorough and universal enough to grant full justice to those whom we may think are in error; a culture which will give every system an honest examination, before deciding on its truth or falsehood. Let our people study other tenets than their own, and sooner or later there will be a sifting of the truth from the dross of error. There should be freedom of all honest expression, controlled mostly by the responsibility which attends it, and by that Christian courtesy which should keep every believer from

willingly judging others. When we stand personally before the solemn bar of responsibility, conscious that past prejudices have often kept us from the full light of truth, knowing that narrowness and blindness and passion have led us astray, we are sure to become lenient and sparing of our denunciations of that which we may believe to be erroneous. While we may never hope to get rid of the fact of experience, that wherever men are in earnest about the meaning of the Bible the greatest diversity will show itself, we may pray to be kept from dissension, and answer our own prayer in the remembrance that we are responsible, and too greatly fallible to judge others in their honest opinions.

There should be a new importance given to Christian practice, with less attention to mere dogma. The Gospel should be impressed as the revelation of a life more than a system of doctrines. The reason is, Christian life can be harmonized, and the logical inferences of men can not. Religious conduct can be brought more definitely within our purview than mere abstract opinion. If this course is pursued, the Church will make its power felt more forcibly on the national life. Secondly, the whole world will see that Christianity is finding its actual unity on grounds of conscience, and not in the adjustings of history, where there are so many problems of precedence, and so many differences.

While it is a matter of great moment as to what we believe, and while it is dangerous to depreciate the importance of knowing the exact truth, it is useless to attempt to accomplish any thing toward

the unity of Christendom in the discussion of old, unsettled questions. The difference of a single letter in two Greek words has divided the Church, and convulsed nations. The chasm of opinion is as broad and deep to-day as ever before. Confessional extremes can seldom be brought together. The impression of deeper religious convictions, and the higher cultivation of the æsthetic feelings, will do as much as all the fixing of theory toward the healthful commingling of diverse elements. The silent work of the Spirit, which operates in a thousand ways, and through instruments which appear weak, often accomplishes more than the systematic and faultless plans of the scholar. The great positive power for which the future of Christianity is asking, will not come from organized adjustments alone, but from the potency and strength of an inwrought spiritual understanding. The science of theology needs to be lifted above the bondage of a contracted dogmatism, into the regions of Christian fellowship and love. All religious thought must have its root in positive doctrine; all spiritual growth must have a basis in fixed belief: yet this does not involve the necessity of always going down into the deep, cold abysses of logic and abstraction.

The attention of the Protestant world needs to be turned from debating matters, which are of some importance, it is true, but not necessary to the salvation of souls. The evangelical spirit should be given pre-eminence over all others. There are so many lands which idolatry and heathenism now darken, that it becomes sacrilege to deprive the

Church of any strength which concerted action might bring. No one should be required to lay down opinion or zeal for the truth, but there are sentiments which might be kept in the background at no sacrifice of principle or honor. This is asking no more for Christian unity than is required at our hands for the social compact. Each member surrenders certain liberties for the welfare of society. He tacitly agrees to give over to society certain natural rights for the protection he receives in return. Man's spiritual life ought to lead him into as reasonable and humane relations as his moral and social being. Every Christian ought to be willing to surrender his individual privileges for the good of the general Church, if that surrender does not require the giving over of an inalienable right.

The world's religious life needs to solve a problem which civil society has already solved, that of the rights of the individual as related to the rights of the whole body. There are refractory members in society who do not receive the punishment that justice demands; yet for such a reason men do not refuse to receive the protection of society. There are important and diverse views concerning political methods; yet for this reason men do not claim that society is a failure, and denounce the idea of a social compact existing under such circumstances. Men universally declare that the common benefits and purposes of society are higher than these things. They place confidence in the patriotism of a people who are not willing to stoop to the destruction of society over secondary conflicts.

Notwithstanding the manifestly imperfect arrangements to be found in American Church-life, the universal patriotism of love to Christ ought to unite all serious Christians into co-operation for the general security and growth of the kingdom. Is it a Christian's bounden duty to constantly annoy the world with his untamed religious hobbies? Does a preacher lose his commission if he should fail to present the dogmatics of his sect in every sermon? Does silence with reference to denominational views signify that we have renounced them? Shall a bigoted vandalism forever drive back the common courtesies of Christian intercourse? An utter forgetfulness of a few threadbare doctrines would be a great blessing. The little truth which might go down with them would pledge its own resurrection, and would doubtless come up brilliantly free from its present thrallodom.

There is now an urgency that the broad banner of established truth shall be elevated higher than our regimental ensigns. The great struggle of principles should overawe all petty and private variances. There should be more generosity and less bitterness; more charity and less debate; more love and less of rash judgment; more brotherhood and less mutual distrust; more of the spirit of the Apostle Paul, who would settle every thing without diplomacy, by pointing to the higher unity of all Christians in Jesus Christ. May God forgive the man who is not willing to extend the hand of fellowship to all who love Christ, or in whose faces may be discovered any clear traces of the old lineaments. A lesson may be learned from the Waldensian Church of North Italy. While

confident that her form of Church government was evangelical, and that her confession of faith was orthodox, she declared through her assembly of 1855 that she would not Waldensianize, but simply evangelize, Italy. The instruction given to her evangelists was: "Go preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, be faithful to the Master, and God bless you." This broad policy had its response from the other free Churches of Italy, who readily recognized the Waldensian Church as a means of evangelizing the country.

For the denominations of America to formally recognize each other as agencies in the conversion of the country, would be a positive step toward better relations. This is of prime importance now, especially the recognition of each others' sacraments and ministry. A very pressing duty, at present, is inter-communion. The time for the fencing of the Lord's table has almost gone by in the popular mind. People of every name and order should meet in a common sacrament, and show forth the death of a common Lord. It is as impossible for churchly authority to hinder approach to the communion-table as to hinder an acceptance of the terms of salvation. The fitness is based on a personal examination, and is not under the control of the ecclesiastic.

Non-interference would also promote Christian unity, because it would deprecate all rivalry. The field is the world, and there is certainly room enough for all. As long as there is so much unoccupied territory in this country, it is a breach of one of the plainest principles of evangelical work to spend talent and money in building up Churches where other de-

nominations are already established, and are affording reasonable Gospel privileges. One of the saddest effects of sectarianism is the conflict of rival Churches in any one community or town. A village having as many ministers as it can support is visited by a new representative, with the proclamation that his principles have a right to live as well as others, and before long another Church and its ministry is added to the already overburdened population. The division of labor is an economic principle, but the extremes of its application work harm. It impoverishes the ministry, and causes more money and labor to be expended in a single place than is justified, when so many fields around are lying waste.

This sad feature of Protestantism has even tainted its mission-work. There is no reason why the missionary work of the Church should not present a greater unity of effort. The fierce zeal and strife on mission grounds have thrown the deepest shadows over the cause of Christ. By what authority do people waste the consecrated forces of God, contending for a single spot when continents just as fertile are left untouched? The dangers in the bitterness of the missionary idea appear more plainly when we consider the magnitude of the harm the sectarian spirit would work in heathendom, as compared with its results at home. As soon as available, let an international council of the Churches be called, and in the spirit of reason let it lay down a few plain rules of non-interference in Christian work.

Another duty, still higher in its nature, is co-operation. This is eminently a practical and successful

mode of promoting the utmost spiritual unity. In our willingness to unite with others on all proper occasions, we learn to distinguish them from their doctrines, and learn to love them when we discover any degree of candor. We are constantly coming in contact with men with whom we can make but a short journey together along the diverging paths of human belief; yet this will not prevent us making ourselves delightful and entertaining companions as far as we do go together. We can thus bid each other farewell, with more pleasant memories than if we should have taken up the time of the journey in thumping theological marbles, or in a battle of orthodoxy. Whenever the moral feelings of a people lead them away from a cold, logical play of the intellect; whenever they are brought face to face with the thrilling themes of redemption — many things which now separate and divide them will be taken away.

In the religious history of this country there is a growing distaste for the contentious and wrangling spirit of dogmatism; and we are fast approaching a decision as to the result of the strife of Christian thought. We are learning to trace the central spirit of Christianity through its manifold expressions around us, and offer only a Gospel of positive and living meaning to the hungering thousands. Above nearly all else do we need, now, *to cling to the great primary truths of the Christian system.* This world, with its vast physical proportions, with its wondrous historic character, with its intelligences rife with immortal impulses, rolls round the sun, under

the central idea that God rules and governs. Nearly all of life's affairs originate and rest on fundamental conceptions.

When the traveler goes to China, to become acquainted with its people and its institutions, he is impressed with the stability of things,—the same laws, the same methods of government, the same great caste system which existed two thousand years ago, the same social customs, the same laws of commerce, the same channels of enterprise, the same architecture, with but little variation from time immemorial,—a phenomenon of national life which is not seen in the Western Hemisphere, where other principles are at work.

In the East, the wonderful stagnation of things, and such adamantine stability as is observable everywhere, has its origin in absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings. In Western Europe and America, a new set of elemental notions are exercising their influence, and bringing about a new order of things. These notions are embodied in the Magna Charta, wrenched from King John in Runnymede: 1. The right of life; 2. The right of freedom; 3. Popular government. These are the principles of Western civilization; and they underlie the political and social and religious life of the age. First principles of truth are not easily established; but, when once made secure, they are sure to bring about abiding results. The notions of liberty which make up the substratum of civil life to-day have been a thousand years in gaining ground; but now, since they are established, their potency is felt to the four

quarters of the earth. This, to illustrate what is meant by the assertion that the Christian system can only achieve a speedy victory over the world through the constant and conscious leadership of its fundamental truths.

CHAPTER IV.

SKEPTICAL THOUGHT.

THIS age is recognized by the universal right of the individual to exercise an untrammeled judgment in all things, and to look with his own eyes into religion, as well as to override it with his philosophy if he pleases. A bold and fearless spirit of investigation has characterized the whole of American history. There is little reverence for established opinion. The vigorous, stirring life of our people has never given the staid customs and opinions of the past time to become so deeply settled as to wield any great influence from force of existence. The logic of Aristotle, and the philosophy of Plato, have but little value because of their age. A free press, a free pulpit, and a free platform, are known as the enemies of received opinion. The searching scrutiny of this critical age beholds one hoary sentiment after another give way. The oldest superstitions are buried without regret. Old methods are thrown down, new ones take their place. The spirit of free inquiry has brought about a new era, and every department of life is reinvigorated. The reverence for authority is broken, and many inroads have been made on the established faith. There

is an immoderate freedom and daring in speaking and writing of divine things.

The course of history is, that the boldest unbelief dethrones superstition. As knowledge increases, as the general mind is prepared to think for itself, the conflict of truth is with doubt rather than credulity. That the Bible should go down in the blaze of modern culture is impossible. That there are breakers ahead no one can deny. There is danger from open and defiant unbelief. There is danger from that large class in society who are trying to forget their doubts in the rush and roar of business life. The dark tide is flowing on. It is not safe to wait.

Sources of Skepticism.—1. One class of the causes of American skepticism may be traced to the condition of the human mind itself. 2. Another class of causes are objective in their nature, and arise from the false exhibitions of Christianity. The first gives rise to the legion of open and avowed foes around us. The second confronts us with an indifferent and credulous army of lookers-on. We may not be able to decide whether professed friends or open foes have most weakened the cause; whether one by their faults and superstitions, or the other with their hatred have most prolonged the conflict.

There is in the human heart an alienation of thought and purpose from the purity of the revealed doctrines, and from the burden of the divine precepts. Under such a condition of things it is very easy for men to grow up under adverse prejudices and pre-dispositions on the side of unbelief. It takes the

natural depravity of both mind and heart to suggest the impossibility of a revelation from God, or to cause the intelligence to stagger at its strangeness. An inner alienation of disposition and sympathy often leads men to seek satisfaction in other systems of belief. It is no surprise, under the circumstances, that men should turn back from a revelation which makes the native propensities of the human heart so uncomfortable with themselves, and which is calculated to probe afresh the depraved wound of sixty centuries. It is not strange that there should be some resentment to a system of laws which crimines man in his history and threatens him for the future. The whip-tiger in human nature repels that which rebukes it. It is to be expected that men should rush into the leniency of pantheism, because nature does not awaken so vividly those immortal forebodings of the unquenched fire and the undying worm. It is no surprise that there should be apostles of materialism, because it takes the soul out of the body and divests it of responsibility. Man is so intensely earthly in his disposition and character that it becomes very easy for him to disbelieve the plainest truths of the spiritual world.

The mind is more ready to grasp and retain impressions of solid physical substances than of those high and holy truths belonging immediately to the divine perfections. It depends largely on the limitations of material figures for whatever it understands of spiritual things. The soul of man, limited by a physical agent, can only approximate in its views toward the perfection of Jehovah in connection with

a succession of such scenes as may be seen by the aid of earthly figures. There is no *sensible* nearness to the operations of Divinity but by the analogy of that which is known. Jacob saw the road to heaven in the vision of a *ladder*. Christianity and its effects in the world are seen in the figure of a *tree* and its *fruits*. We call Christ a *rock*, and we hold to the glory of his personage in the shape of a *crown* with *stars* in it.

The influence of the spirit we designate by *fire* and *light*, and such other approximations as we may find. The personal relation of the soul to Christ, for our understanding, is illustrated in the Divine Word by the *vine* and its *branches*. There can be clearer mental views of such terms as fire, earth, water, wood, stone, than of such terms as mind, spirit, soul, God. The Creator appreciates this defect, and speaks to his children of earth in parables. He wraps his truth in the silken folds of allegory, because the mind can be more readily fixed on visible and tangible things. They are more likely to absorb its powers.

Now, if to this natural propensity there be added a thorough devotion to the investigation of physical phenomena, the result will bring us to the source of half the so-called scientific skepticism of the day. There is no surer, swifter way to warp a man's life and character than to shut him up in his chemical laboratory, with pick and retort, or with philosophical apparatus and telescope to calculate by sines and cosines, with no moral truth to move him, or no religious fire to warm his soul. The devil in science is a subtle beast. He first attracts, then charms, then

fascinates, then enchant^s, then ensnares. He busies the brain with material forces until it has no time to look out by faith toward the unseen world. He stops the devotee at the very threshhold of the spiritual temple.

It is not a difficult thing to become versed in any single department of learning. An ordinary mind can make grand attainments in any chosen and definite field of thought. In order to meet the requirements of higher education, it becomes necessary that men devote their lives to some channel of investigation. And yet, without great care, these special pursuits become ruinous to other sympathies and faculties. An *adjustment* of acquisitions is most favorable to the development of character. An exclusive interest in religious matters tends toward superstition. Entire devotion to physical laws leads in the opposite direction, to a disbelief in any influence outside of natural phenomena. The history of the Church reveals that, in the neglect of learning, and in the denial of the just influences of the natural world, religious thought always drifts in sympathy toward credulity and a love for the marvelous. The growth of scientific research has shown that its greatest votaries have sometimes turned worshipers. Living illustrations might be given. The study of alternate pages of nature and revelation would alleviate alike the superstition of the religionist, and the skepticism of the scientist.

Another outward hinderance to the progress of the Gospel in this country is ignorance of the revealed plan, as such. There is an unbelief which has stumbled

and fallen over the mysteries of the Christian system. There is a class of so-called seekers after truth whose stubborn requirement is that all may be made plain: the Incarnation, the dual nature of Christ, the Trinity, the divine chemistry of the soul's conversion, the processes of the resurrection; and all the minutiae of heaven. Oh, how many more ages shall the world live before it learns that accepting Christianity is like being cast naked into mid-ocean? Your feet do not touch the bottom, your hands do not touch either shore; you are given swimming room for your faith! Here lies the supreme and perpetual value of Christianity! Salvation by faith is the grandest doctrine of the Bible! As many things in nature are accepted as matters of fact, and are acted upon when little or nothing is known of their nature, so in religion, its mysteries are accepted as facts, though the human mind may not be able to comprehend their analytical significance. It is said that in the wilds of Mesopotamia there are water sources known to the wild gazelle, for which the Arabs have searched in vain for ages.

The inherent tendency of sin is to open rejection of the divine authority. The passions and the lusts and the appetites of man are the abettors of unbelief. Even the rightful propensities of the heart are often found forfeiting their allegiance to God, and are made to subserve a similar purpose. Human pride offers a perpetual protest against the humbling conditions of a Christian life. The Gospel reflects on man's ability to help himself out of his spiritual difficulty; while, on the other hand, such has been

the growth of art and science, and the development of mind in the last five centuries, commercial enterprise has so wonderfully ameliorated man's physical condition, the temptation is to believe that there are inherent spiritual potencies in the race, and that the time for an appeal to the revealed authority has gone by. The fruits of the energies which have been awakened by the Reformation have been misdirected into an argument to dispense with Christianity altogether. The material results of our system are utilized into a denial of its spiritual truth. The greatest impulses which it has awakened are turned into arrows to drink its life-blood.

Objective Causes.—While the institutions of Christianity have given to the world the heritage of much that it possesses, its exhibitions of life and doctrine have not always been pure and commendable. The history of Christianity contains the sad record of superstitions revolting to human reason, and many blunders in rashest fanaticism. In the narrowness of patristic times came the destruction of the Serapion. Millions of lives were sacrificed to the whims of religious partisanship in the reign of Justinian. Time and again, in the name of the Gospel of Christ, temporal interests have been sustained at the cost of bloodshed and the oppression of human thought. The unfortunate circumstances of mediæval history made Church officialism the enemy of culture and progress and discovery.

From the slow movement of ideas in Europe, an intellectual sluggishness followed the Reformation,

which handed down the generations many crude and half-superstitious doctrines. Our misfortune is to have inherited some of them. It is disagreeable to see them explode in the face of our enlightenment. It is never pleasant to have our enemies pointing out our imperfections, when there is no other alternative but to confess. There has been something of a tendency to ignore what many honest minds have known to be manifest superstitions. The enemies of religion have stepped in, and have undertaken to do for us what we should have been careful to do for ourselves. And they have not been content with an honest purging; they have gone to the extravagance of holding up a few untenable and secondary facts as representatives of the system. They have discovered theological tenets with defective modes of proof. They have tried to rush Christianity into the conflict, without its prestige, and without its central evidences. It will be admitted, by every honest thinker, that skepticism has been striking at the excrescence of religious history with some success.

This is one of the things which has darkened the path of Christian progress, and has furnished the occasion for those who have been bold enough to offer their thrusts. By it many strong ones may have become weak, many weak ones may have fallen. The wonder is, the Church ever escaped so free from fault, or lived at all. If the Church has been endowed with an inherent and sacred life, to wade through fire and blood, and over rack and guillotine, and to survive the revolutions of society and

the fall of empires, and to brook the rage of infidelity and devils, and come through so slightly tarnished, so far as the weight of such an evidence will go, it deserves to be recognized as the world's celestial visitor. The Church has been traveling over perilous ground. It has passed through the discipline of fires. The experience is worth something, withal.

The fallibility of the Church can not reasonably be made the scape-goat of unbelief. It has never been the primary cause of doubt, or even the occasion, except in its corruptions. Yet accumulated slanders have resulted in much harm. The tenor of Romanism, in repudiating the policy of every free nation, has been adverse to the growth of Christian principles in enlightened thought. Withholding the Bible from the people is rendered into an acknowledgment of a want of faith in its power to cope with advancing knowledge. Many may be thrown into unbelief, in the conviction that the world is about to be driven into the dangerous citadel of Church infallibility. Every appeal to weak and silly miracles, and all enmity to popular evidences, and all deifications of the priesthood, and all sale of indulgences, are calculated to strengthen and encourage the hosts of moral infidelity. Imposture, as it is discovered around ecclesiastical altars, will cast its shadows over all that is sacred in religious life. These things appear from no fault of the Church, as Christ established it. They come up from a source lower than themselves, from a race-degeneracy, which has succeeded, so far, in tainting alike all institutions of time.

The reality of religion in its power over the life has no necessary connection with defective morals or the malformation of doctrine. The difficulty is here: in periods of sober reflection, man may be taught to distinguish a religion of love and purity from its corruptions, but in times of individual excitement, or of social revolution, the two are always blended. False doctrines and scurvy professors have always been stumbling-blocks. They are the outposts of infidelity. They give the natural heart a chance to ward off its obligations for the moment, and finally to forget them.

Another phase of religious life, which often makes sad work in the world, is the prevalence of an artificial faith, which leads to religionism rather than to purity of heart and life. It might be called a straining of the religious faculties beyond that which the life will permit them to go. It seldom stops short of fanaticism, and will sooner or later cause the soul to cast off all religious restraint. There are a great many minds not given to sentimentalism, and to whom a dawdling religiousness is repulsive, who are thus repelled, and are driven into other fields of inquiry.

The unsettled relations of Church and State in the Old World has been one of the most fruitful sources of skepticism. Men of political life are thrown into antagonism with the clergy and the ecclesiastical canon, and, failing to sift the truth from its misdirected external organism, they find themselves, almost unawares, pitted against the most vital doctrines of Scripture. The people of the United States are look-

ing with the profoundest interest on the solution of this problem in Europe. As the matter now stands, she is the fruitful nursery of new forms of unbelief very likely to cast their shadows on the religious life of our own country.

Skepticism finds another occasion for its activity in a protest against the unreasonable assumption that the Church may impose her belief by authority. A very just ground of complaint. There is not an unreasonable truth anywhere in revelation. Nothing which may not be sustained to the limits of moral reasoning. And yet science, so-called, is guilty of that of which it complains. How many strange conjectures, how many wild chimeras, have gone forth under the name of science. Geology has built more air-castles under the patronage of science than perhaps could be found in the history of the Church. Materialism resolves all creation into a primary force, and blandly calls it science. It is only a just requirement that the light of reason should shine on the doctrines of the Christian system; but it is certainly very unreasonable to require the full force of this argument at the hands of every believer. A majority of those who stand as living witnesses to the truth of revelation accepted it primarily from popular consent. They are not systematically learned in the unanswerable arguments of the Christian apologist. This being true, I can see no reason why a personal testimony to regenerative grace should not be believed as the statement of a fact, as in any thing else; and why an aggregate of such testimony should not carry with it a conclusive weight.

Nature of Skepticism.—The forces of American infidelity are, in a measure, segregated. Like individuals at a *soiree* who have not been introduced, there is a mutual recognition in the interests of the hour, but no understanding, no intimate acquaintance, no friendship. Skepticism in this country has not yet risen to make a premeditated attack on the institutions of Christianity. There is no concerted action, no settled line of policy. There is not yet any single, definite, and overmastering form of unbelief, like the rationalism of Germany, under whose patronage all secondary phases of doubt may live. It is marked rather by an array of comparatively independent forces, carrying on a skirmish-battle under the general brigandage of personal ambition. Skeptical thought evinces considerable strength and prowess without giving off any thing remarkably new. Old ideas are putting on new expressions, and are propagated through different policies and methods, requiring, in some measure, an adjustment of weapons in the warfare against it. It wears a new garment, so that it may not be known at first sight. If all classes of men can be made to understand the religious conflicts of the times, there will not be such great difficulty in selecting agencies, and in instituting plans for the most favorable results.

There are two classes of errorists in this country. One class believes that true science can not be advanced without clipping the wings of faith. The other conceives that it renders God and the Bible a service by depreciating knowledge and research. They are represented by the extremes of intense human phi-

losophy and religious fanaticism. The light of the first is like the fire-fly of the tropics, it illuminates the darkness, but it fails to dispel the great night of time. The other is like the volcano, flaming from internal commotion, giving out fire and smoke and vapor to darken the land and make it more hideous. This is the rebellion, so called, between nature and revelation, between science and the Bible. It is an army of sky-rockets meeting an army of popguns, marching to the music of a corn-stalk fiddle.

Other skeptical forces are not so bold and outspoken; they move with a cautious tread, hesitating even to formulate into statement the conclusions which wonderful exertions have been expended to adduce. 1. Of this kind is the far-reaching attempt to undermine the doctrine of a Divine Providence. 2. In accounting for all forms of life through natural selection, or the survival of the fittest. 3. Explaining all phases of human history in the correlation of forces, or the reign of law. And, 4. An attempt to find the ultimate of sentient life in vegetable matter, and to base human thought itself in materialism. The burning up of brain-cells produces thought. The mind has no native power of its own. It can not exist apart from the physical organ of the brain. All intellectual activity finds its basis in the laws of sensation.

If these claims can be sustained, of course there is no need of the assertion that man has no soul, no immortality, or that there is no God.

Through the mediation of the exact sciences, there is an effort to counterwork a current of opinion

in opposition to the revealed doctrines of faith. To sustain an opinion, fathered by a desire, that no revelation from God to man is possible, the domains of the metaphysical, the moral, and historical kingdoms have been ransacked for material.

In this task, religion is often patronized as a good thing. In fact, as it seems that man must have some kind of religious belief, Christianity is to be preferred above all others. It is the paragon of all worldly systems. It appears very durable, and makes a first-class foundation for our social and civil buildings. It is to be complimented for the good it has wrought. The Bible is a respectable and high-toned volume. It has taught the ages many sublime and beautiful things. But it belongs to the world's great Spring-time, and is hardly able to satisfy an age of such fruition as this. The Bible ought to be revised. A form of worship and a set of doctrines able to gratify the religious wants of the savage, it is claimed, are not able to satisfy the man of culture. The progressive theory is, religion is a universal phenomenon of man's being, and its chief glory is the power of taking on itself new forms and doctrines to suit new popular sympathies. A swift-flowing age, which has made useless nearly all that is old in other departments of life, can not be expected to take much interest in the teachings of a patriarchal sheik, or Jewish Rabbi, or a wild old Prophet, or the Nazarene Jesus.

Established facts of science have not so much been brought into collision with these Oriental doctrines, which are mostly true; they have simply sup-

planted them; they have disrobed them of their utility, like old roadsters turned into the common through which runs the railroad. The victory is already proclaimed. Christianity is a "century-mossed system;" "already passed away." What a pity! Just now, as it is reaching out its arms to embrace all nations. It appears a matter of surprise to many that Christianity has not stepped aside and taken its place among the *debris* and rubbish of antiquity. It is fatal to the worshiper of law that some things were not born to die, and surrender their places to the newest thing out.

It is a matter of surprise to many that Christianity should be able to verify itself anew, as occasion may require. Sciolism is thunderstruck that the marvelous discoveries of material nature have not been able to whistle religion down the wind. The religion of Christ is supposed to have inbred in itself an inherent disorder, leading to its death. This new method of metaphysical therapeutics proposes to instruct the Christianity of the time in the gathered wisdom of the ages. Alas for the dignity of an occasion where the pupil is older and wiser than its teacher! It offers to cure its patient by cutting off its limbs, and then prescribe a potion which has cost the death of philosophy to administer more than once in history. The Athenians sneered at Paul, and Paul's religion burned a big hole in the Athenian philosophy. That which is new is not necessarily an improvement on the old. Governments of antiquity may not have solved all problems in civil law, yet they have given us a system of jurispru-

dence deserving the gratitude of the latest ages. The old Roman law has been a blessing beyond estimate to modern civilization. The civil code of Moses, in its spirit, will never find an equal. Grecian and Roman philosophy and literature compare favorably with any thing that the world has since produced. It is no objection to the Bible that God has not cut and changed its doctrines to suit the fashion. It is not the purpose of the revealed plan to present something new and striking, but something truthful and permanent.

Christianity is also being held up before the world as unsavory and offensive to the high-toned culture, to the æsthetic and refined feeling, of the age. This feeling is perceived in a kind of chivalric revulsion against the solemn doctrines of desolation and woe pronounced on the sinner. The celestial sensibilities of the natural man have sugared the devil, and made him harmless, like a lamb. The most solemn and dreadful of revealed truths are cast aside, abrogated, under the pretense that the noblest sympathies of mind and heart rebel against them.

This sentiment inheres in the spirit of the times, and comes from a like source with that popular craving which secular journalism feeds when it depreciates the virtues and magnifies the faults of those who are in Church authority, and shows a sovereign disrespect toward the most sacred truths of revelation. From the same source, also, is the antagonism to Christian institutions, now beginning to show itself in political circles and in halls of legislation.

A most noticeable feature of unbelief is its vacil-

lating character. It has no fixed and permanent plans. Its history reads like the history of all falsehood: a series of advances and retreats, now desperate and bold, now lurking and indecisive, now building great fortresses, now leaving them as in flight from great danger.

The first attempt was to explain away the supernatural things of Scripture, by giving a natural interpretation wherever possible, and by referring every thing else to the region of myth and tradition. The narratives of Abram and Jacob and Joseph and Moses, and the miracle-workers of the Bible, are placed alongside the legends of Homer, and contemporary mythologic heroes.

The next effort was to refer the writing of the Gospels to some post-apostolic era, and thus invalidate their claims to credence. Historic criticism has defeated each of these arguments.

A later assault has been made on the person of Jesus Christ. The divinity of his nature has been doubted. Low and unworthy views of his character have been entertained.

Of this cast of skeptical thought is Renan's "Life of Jesus." It is claimed that the exalted ideas which strongly filled his mind in the earlier period of his life were never realized; and, as soon as Christ discovers that his purposes are failing, he surrenders to the disappointment, suffers himself to become embittered, and descends to the plane of a miracle-worker. Martha and Mary put Lazarus in a grave, while yet alive, and then send for Jesus to call him forth! This is Renan's Jesus,—a man to whom he

attributes the highest degree of morality in other parts of his work! Only a degree less in blasphemy is his wresting of Scripture in the "Life of Paul."

Skepticism has the advantage of being, in a general sense, negative. Only in a few minds has it attempted to meet the reasonable requirements of an innovation. It presents itself in disguised sophistries, and with a multitude of questions. It makes thrusts, without telling why it does so. It has never offered to fill the world with any thing higher and better than Christianity. Its source of hatred and activity is that common enmity which is always in array against the world's overmastering and divine influences. Many of the higher metaphysical doubts make up a list of denials:

1. A denial of a personal cause.
2. A denial of the testimony of consciousness.
3. A denial of a providence.
4. A denial of all primary or intuitional truth.
5. A denial of all thought-power beyond the life-chemistry of the brain.
6. A denial of all design in nature.

Under the belief that natural laws are able to administer themselves, an infinite purpose is regarded as useless, except to explain a few outlying facts; and future investigation may even show these to belong to the realms of the physical, and doubting erudition may be able to dispense entirely with its troublesome rival, an intelligent cosmos. We have instances in our history of extensive revivals of negativism. Every intelligent American is acquainted with the illustrious name of Channing, whose vigor-

ous thought and silvery eloquence led many away into the dismal and arid regions of semi-materialistic socinianism; yet he owes hundreds of his followers, and very greatly his influence, to the social and theological preparation which the stiff, century-dried orthodoxy of Puritanism had given him. The tone of religious thought at the time had fully prepared many minds for the cold intensities of Channing.

A little later, there was given an opportunity for whatever there was of revulsion in the spirit of the time, against its lifeless formalism, to be attracted and attach itself to the intuitional philosophy of Theodore Parker. It would be unfair not to recognize that the teachings of Parker led to the development of many noble qualities of the natural man. While he often declared his independence of all history, and broke the bounds of all custom and reason, he brought the energies of a powerful intellect into its fullest exertion, to arouse into a worship the instinctive sympathies of the soul. What an inexhaustible fountain from which to draw supplies for his wonderful teaching! There was such a warmth and glow of love about Parker's doctrines, such a mystical strangeness, such a melting fervency, that it won on many whose former religious lives had been tempered like cold steel.

Channing and Parker are types of a few restless spirits, whose influence on American thought is due to the attention which genius always commands, and to the appeals to some silent yet needful voice of religious reform. They are little more than exponents of a cast of thought which promises nothing

in the end, because it reaches no definite conclusions other than those embraced in the Christian system. While it claims to be led on by the promptings of a boundless freedom in opinion, yet it appropriates about all that divine truth teaches of the heart-life. It writes a great many beautiful pages. It appears like a Thesaurus of eloquent utterances. Drops of water in a Summer shower form a beautiful bow arching the heavens—a swift ephemeral vision. So these air-castles of free thought, these ropes of sand, might be commended for the few grains of truth they contain, and for the amusement they afford. It is unsafe to risk the destinies of the soul to their protection. An empty system can never last. When its glamour is gone it must pass away. Every uncommon tendency which has been started by some queer original of the world's brilliants is like fungus on a great wall, collected during a night to be driven away by the coming sun. Every thing of unnatural growth in religious as well as in natural life either finds itself arrayed in deadly antagonism with some extraneous force or discovers in itself inherent elements of self-destruction. False philosophy is like a huge wheel, turning on its axis, bringing with every revolution the same methods of thought and inquiry, and turning each time on an accumulated wealth of refutation.

In the nature of skepticism, a word may be given to a new form of opposition now engaging the attention of scholars, supposed to be drawn from the comparative study of religions. Man's religious nature, in all parts of the world, has produced remark-

able resemblances in its spiritual codes. This fact is made the basis of the conclusion that all religions are simply psychological phenomena. To show how much Christianity has in common with other systems, to point out its wonderful affinities and its astonishing analogies, is to build up a plausible and ingenious argument for those who are not familiar with the true cause of this likeness. To find the Lord's Prayer in the haunts of pre-christian magianism, or to discover the golden rule twice uttered negatively in the teachings of Confucius, is taken as *prima facie* evidence that Christ's spiritual building is not a new one, but a patch-work of orientalism.

Max Muller has undertaken to show the parallel between Brahminism descending to Buddhism, and Judaism descending to Christianity. The parallel is well put, and is rather remarkable; but it is fortuitous, and can not be made complete. In the Old and New Testaments we have such a network of purpose, such a miraculous dovetailing, making one system so unique in its character that history fails to show any exact resemblance. The reasonable fact of the unity of the human race will account for all likeness of other religions to Christianity beyond that which is not explained in the common propensities of mind and heart.

The soul's hungerings are universal. Man is not like the beast. The ox fills himself with the grass of the pasture and is satisfied. The lion hides in the jungle, seeks and devours his prey, then lies down in his lair—his beastly appetites all gratified. Not so with man. When all this is done he wants food for

the supply of another nature. He looks out into the great unseen with yearnings and askings for the divine. This spiritual thirsting is forever asserting itself until fully supplied. False religions are but misdirected impulses of the soul. The world's mythologies are but busy creations of the brain, showing it to be the heart's best friend. The thousands of forms in which religious worship presents itself only reveal how great has been the search for the bread of heaven. And the points of resemblance are in universal and primary truths, such as are suggested by the natural wants of the soul. This is what Paul would call a "law unto itself." It is creative in its nature. This is why it may be asserted with assurance, that God's purposes are in no danger of being overthrown.

We do not desire to leave the impression that systematic unbelief holds, as yet, a very wide-spread or dangerous influence in this country. In the struggle of half a century it has gained a foothold. During the same time the progress of Christian thought and experience is beyond computation. A belief in Christian principles is so thoroughly infused in the masses as to leave them little disturbed by metaphysical doubts. There may be found in many communities individualists who, to appear original, or for the sake of oddity, catch up the arguments of skeptical thinkers, and use them as shifts of personal responsibility. In the spread of enlightenment, which always fosters a degree of independent reflection, these individualists may be expected to multiply. To educate the mind is to prepare it to think for itself and to make inquiries. It is impossible to prevent these

inquiries reaching into the domains of religious life, even if it were desirable. The great adversary sows tares in the best cultivated ground. Germany and all Europe has suffered severely in being unable to check unbelief in its inceptive stages. Therefore the times look critical. We fear no present, but an impending danger.

The treachery of learned unbelief, so called, is slowly gathering recruits, is silently taking hold on popular thought. The powers of the air are on the alert. They whisper no religion, no God, no heaven, no hell, nothing around, above, beneath. An irresponsible definition is given to life, and the grave is the couch of an eternal sleep. This is no time to fold our arms in the certainties of Scripture prophecy. If the conquest of the world is retarded a single day by our lethargy, the din of lost souls will be fearful in the judgment. This is no time to slumber. We are called to meet the requirements of the grandest illumination the world has ever known. This is no time for lax morality, for intrigue, and double dealing. This generation is now almost too wicked to be curbed by the restraints of vital godliness. It is certain that the conflict of the future is of most profound importance. New means are being discovered by which the Gospel is assailed. Dimensions are taken as never before known. The half-turbulent stream is flowing on. "The day of the Lord is near at hand in the valley of decision."

Methods for its Overthrow.—In the first place, we are to keep in mind that the struggle is not only

against the arguments and the logic of other minds honestly in search of truth, but the conflict is partly with the unseen and evil powers; against whom, if left unaided, human energies can be subordinated at will, and the most dreadful consequences may ensue. The truth in human history was not born for unhindered progress. The world has always been under the influence of opposing forces. The introduction of sin into the world implied a long and arduous struggle between truth and error, between light and darkness. The contest has been maintained, stern, hot, relentless. The past holds up its bloody hand, and we turn pale before the evidences of so long and cruel a conflict; and, when the present grapples the same weapons so firmly, we shudder for the future. The powers of evil are no mean rivals to the warrior hosts of God. They are often able to lift the faculties of the mind from their balance, and almost compel the reluctant soul to do their bidding. This world is yet subjected to the destructive energies of hell. A wail of deathless souls in sin comes up from every nation, and almost every fireside.

That great volume of human misery, whose title-page is the sad story of Eden, has for its closing sentence, if yet written, "All hail, futurity! The accusing spirit, with a pen of fire, is ready to chronicle the dire events of another six thousand years." Milton had a conception of the reality, when Gabriel asks:

"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
To thy transgressions?"

Then Satan answers:

“Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance.”

In the conflict with unbelief, which may widen and deepen to superhuman proportions, our chief reliance is in the divine arm. As sure as there is a God in heaven, universal harmony will at last prevail. If, on account of sin, Christ was made to walk the earth, weary, footsore, houseless, homeless, he is yet the builder of a house not made with hands. In the grandeur of his lowly mission, his power was not half exerted. He is now able to stand on a loftier summit than that of Tabor, able to walk on a mightier sea than that of Galilee, able to withstand the malice of a universe of such worlds as this. Omnipotence and mercy are pledged that the conditions of the great covenant shall be fulfilled. Sooner or later, a strong hand will be laid on the hilt of Satan’s sword, with a demand that he shall not unsheathe it. Faith in the ultimate triumph of truth may be embraced with all the possibilities of absoluteness.

While human confidence in supernal agencies should be kept clearly in the foreground, there should be great care taken to guard against the extremes of dogmatic assertion, which disdains to stoop to the requirements of reason. The honest skeptics of this country are often enlightened, and they can not be successfully ruled as children under the superior wisdom of the Church. There is more or less

of revolt against constituted authority in every fine mind. No appliances of a dictatorial spirit will ever wean these doubting Thomases from the error of their ways. Every doctrine of Christianity which comes at all under the cognizance, and within the scope of the human faculties, will only wax more lustrous in the severest tests of examination. Sadly, there has been so much of the authoritative, and so little of willingness to give evidence, even when it was at hand, that the world's faith has been threatened in the very foundations of religion. There are thousands seriously troubled as to the reality of religion. There are those who never had the evidences of the truth of Christianity presented to their minds, except in such degree as they have been able to gather it themselves from the Bible, and from its fruits in society and the world; and, in the growth of broader and enlarged views in other affairs, these evidences often become insufficient for a positive and reliable spiritual resting-place.

That the mind should be so constituted that it should need, every now and then, a stronger array of systematic evidences, is no misfortune, since it inheres in the Gospel of Christ to reassert itself in the face of reason, whenever required.

There are two kinds of temptations; one of body, and another of mind. The latter always presents the most insuperable difficulties. Individual doubters may have been able, so far as the light has dawned upon them, to curb and control every low and vicious passion and desire, and they may be worthy examples of moral manhood; but they have been made

to hesitate by the necessity of their surroundings. Early life has been spent among scoffers, or among unfortunate specimens of redeeming grace, or where religion was at so low an ebb that its influences were of small consequence. Such as have been shaken in their belief by the inconsistencies of professional Christian life should receive at the hands of the Church the kindest consideration. To meet all reasonable inquiries, is the task of the Christian world. So commonplace does the Gospel become sometimes, that many rational difficulties are left unsolved in the popular mind. It is unfortunate when religious instructors of the people go on for years, without presenting the external proofs that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

If it be claimed that these evidences can not be presented except on the assumption of falsehood or doubt, the reply is, it is better to recognize doubt, as a fact, and meet its demands, especially when such unanswerable arguments are at hand, than to ignore it, and let it eat like a canker in the religious thought of society. An ignorant faith may call this "fighting the devil's battles," but the zeal of all healthful reasoning requires a candid statement of adverse facts. Why should a people be chloroformed as to so important a matter as the personal presence and influence of Satan in the world? Why should there be any attempt to cover up and hide from public view any great hinderance to the growth and the spread of Christian principles? An ever-recurring question is, "Have we a revelation at all?" The great doctrines of the atonement need repeating.

So do these primary discussions on the foundations of our belief need to be rehearsed in the face of the world. In the conflict with antichrist, the Church should never shrink from apology. The life of the Church in the first ages rested on its merits and its truth, and very greatly on the ability of the fathers to give a reason for the belief within them. As often as duty may require, let the Church cheerfully undertake the task of exposition, and, as in apostolic times, the armory of truth will only be more complete after the conflict.

But whenever the human understanding steps beyond its sphere, and lays under tribute man's religious nature, with the claim that the intellect is absolute sovereign over the whole man, holding the scepter over the emotions and the soul's consciousness, it goes beyond the reach of all argument for the truth of the Gospel. If it is contended that every thing which can not be brought within the cognizance of the thought-faculty and the judgment is to be resolved into the unknowable, and repudiated, the first thing is to show the fallacy of such a position by an appeal to the immortal and unchangeable intuitions of the soul. The profoundest convictions of life are found emanating from man's spiritual nature; convictions which are stronger than the intellect or the will, and nothing but a plunge into the depths of utter nihilism can ever silence them. Socrates, in his appeals to the testimonies of consciousness, prepared an argument for the overthrow of the philosophy of Spinoza before it was born. As long as skepticism clings to the notion that reason is arbiter of the uni-

verse, it may be necessary, not only to show that reason has a place, but where that place is, and that it has no controversy with religious faith. Within the limits which God has assigned reason, it should be the ultimate of all appeal. Its abuse brings disgrace more surely than to stop short of its limits and dwell in the regions of superstition.

Every thing in the world has its appropriate sphere. Each individual thing has its relation to all others, and its notch in the universe as well. The discords of life and history are for want of a proper adjustment of principles. The world's redundancies are not God-given. Every conflict of natural influences finds its cause in human fault and inexperience. Nature itself makes no such blunders. When the lark starts to meet the sun he is not likely to have the bat for his companion. The owl knows better than to go with the eagle when he pierces the splendors of heaven. Human reason, whose home is in the shadows of this world, need not expect to eclipse the wings of faith. It is dazzled when it looks in the face of the Son of Righteousness. The puny arm of the intellect has never yet taken hold on the ordinary mysteries of nature. The proudest scientific research has never been able to tell how God tints the petals of the rose. There is a mystery in the moving of my pen over these pages which baffles all the wisdom of man. Skeptical philosophy has forever struggled to find the ultimatum of its principles. With every attempt to get behind phenomena and enter the realm of mystery, there has been a failure. The unsanctified mind, in its blindness, reaches out

frantically, hoping to grasp the hand of God, and the veil of an intolerable mystery drops down to put an end to the struggle. The worshipful goddess of reason has been trying all methods to prove her right to the world's devotion, and with no success. When left to her own resources, she appears with the inherited misfortune of having no ultimate basis for human activity. Her votaries are seen taking great excursions through literature and history, then returning with doubled assiduity to their studies in natural science, with no results except such as will add new luster to the Christian name.

All known relations of matter and force, all investigation in the material world, should be recognized as having a value. Every now and then a nugget of golden truth is dug from the rich mines of science. The old philosophies are being presented anew, are being polished until we admire their beauties. New fires are kindled along the pathway of history. Yet the revelation which has given man the impregnable fortress of a first cause is rejected. The plain way of the Gospel which robs man of the glory is refused for the struggle to climb up some other way. Like a bird in a cage, reason may fly from the bottom to the top and cling to the wires, yet every struggle exhibits its weakness. It shows that there are boundaries to its activities, a world without, which it is not yet permitted to explore. Revelation alone adds meaning to creation. "Through faith we understand the worlds were formed by God." Omnipotence alone accounts for the origin of matter; and its wonderful adjustments are only explained in an infinite

intelligence. Without the idea of a Creator, as implied in the Bible, the idea of an intelligent moral being is an enigma. These are gulfs which the human mind, with all its natural powers, could never have leaped. This argument should be kept in view through the whole controversy. It is easy to use, and for the purpose it serves is conclusive.

True philosophy is sure to aid the cause of Christ, because it takes into consideration all the relations of life. It deals not only with material facts, but moral facts, and facts of faith. It wants to know not only that Minerva came from the head of Jupiter, but it seeks the final cause of such a procedure. If the mountain labors and brings forth only a mouse, philosophy repudiates the whole affair. True philosophy never decides a case beforehand. It recognizes a connection of thought which rests on the foundation of faith. Philosophy, as a method of inquiry, rests on facts. It calls to its aid a devout heart as well as a clear head and a trenchant intellect. By keeping this distinction in mind, endless controversies may be avoided.

A disposition to repudiate every thing which reaches out into the domains of faith has resulted, in a great measure, from a misunderstanding of its nature. In its primary significance, once and for all, faith is simple trust. It is not an intellectual power. It is not the conclusion of the mind's deductions. It is not the acceptance of popular religious opinion. It is not the granting of the truth of the redemptive theory. It is the coming to Christ and accepting, not his nature, but *him* as revealed in the experiences

of regeneration. To be hid with Christ in God goes deeper than all theory; it is more conclusive than all objective evidence; it goes beyond all thought. It lays under tribute the whole life, demanding the exercise of the moral faculties, the affections, and the conscience, controlling the will, subordinating the whole man. Faith, as such, has nothing to do with philosophy or speculative thought; yet it depends on them for its existence and development. The life of faith grows broader and deeper as the grounds of human confidence become more firm. To rob the heart of faith would be more sad than to rob the mind of reason. Faith can not be coerced or driven into terms. It is an act as free as the volitions of the Almighty himself, yet no one lives a day without it. In a temporal sense, it is necessary to the existence of society under its present relations. In a spiritual sense, it is necessary to the existence of the soul's essence.

It will not be out of place to show how skeptical philosophy receives its weapons from its professed enemies. There is no way of estimating the benefits of the Christian system. What streams of life it has started flowing, what barren regions it has fertilized, what multiplied influences for good it has started vibrating through eternity, will only be revealed on the sheen of the Judgment. Christianity has given to the modern world its civilizations. It is so intimately inwoven with American institutions as to become the guarantee of every right they bequeath to the individual, or to the State at large. In its political force it has changed the entire aspect of the

globe. The energies which it has awakened have lifted the nations from the shadows of ignorance. Our children are rocked under its influence in their cradles. They discover its traces in their school-books, and in nearly every author of respectability. The Christian system has brought to the present age untold opportunities of a social and political nature. To go beyond its unconscious influences is to reach the boundaries of barbarism. The American people live under the constant elevation of its doctrines. Our facilities for education and culture are its lasting fruits. The impress of its plastic hand is seen in every department of thought. It is probable that skeptics sometimes owe a sublime morality of life to the purity of character which it inculcates. Those who denounce it are offering ingratitude to the fostering mother of nearly all their blessings.

A constant appeal should be made to the deeper needs of the soul, as they are made conscious in the life. Wonderful adjustments of supply and demand may be seen in nature. The eye gives utility to the light, and at the same time, light is made necessary to its healthful existence. For the purpose of hearing, there are conditions in the atmosphere as necessary as is the wonderful mechanism of the ear itself. So with the lungs; the atmosphere is perfectly adapted to supply their need in the work of blood-cleansing. The stomach wants food; all nature rises up to furnish the supply. Another marvelous illustration may be seen in the relations of the animal and plant kingdoms. The principal elements of air are oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, and nitrogen. In respiration,

oxygen and nitrogen are taken up from the atmosphere; and carbon and hydrogen are given off from the lungs. Plants feed on one part of the atmosphere, human tissue on another. Plants give off as *debris* that which the animal body needs, and the animal body gives off that which plants need. There is an adjustment and a mutual dependence; want on one hand, supply on the other. This is God's natural economy in the world of matter. But man is not only a being with physical requirements. He has a spirit nature, and is endowed with religious wants—not *acquired* wants either, but real, inborn endowments.

1. The soul needs a First Cause. To know the source of all being and life, appeals like an intuition to the consciousness. The cravings of the human understanding are only completely satisfied when it reads, "In the beginning, God."

2. Man's universal thirsting for immortality is one of his settled experiences.

3. With our first impressions of society comes the conviction that there is something wrong. Its sad disorders, its feverish excitements, its lusts, its ambitions, its unrest, and its unsatisfied longings, lead to the conclusion that the race is now suffering under the effects of some great misfortune, is very greatly under the control of malignant forces. In centers of wealth and luxury, where every physical want is gratified, there are haggard countenances, and knit brows, and great burdensome anxieties, so deep and real as to bring out on the canvas of human life, in legible characters, the utterance of the Nazarene

Jesus, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Ask the man of wealth if the affluence he has gained satisfies the cravings of his being. The acquisition of wealth for its own sake never fails to intensify the desire. Many are married to gold, and the cold, bright thing never returns the affections that are lavished upon it. Ask the man of ambition if the amaranth of fame ever brought him any permanent joy, or if it satisfied his thirst for glory. Earthly plaudits do not bring the desired satisfaction. They are like tinseled butterflies crushed in the rude hand of a giant. They have no power to assuage the soul's consuming spirit, which devours its victim, like vultures at the flesh of a bound Prometheus.

All history has been darkened with misdirected impulses. Men pamper their bodies, give themselves over to the pursuit of ambition or pleasure, and starve their souls. We challenge unbelief to bring contentment to the deeper needs of our being. Has any thing in the world satisfied these wants but Christianity? In the existence of these conscious and natural demands of the human spirit materialism is overthrown, because they imply a moral sentiment. They confront any system which denies man's religious nature.

In the work of apology, there should be a distinction between what is essential to the existence of Christianity and that which is only relatively important. It is not safe to hang the destinies of religion on narrow issues, when broad and indubitable facts are at hand. Critical unbelief is always glad to compare its small details with things of the same

kind in religion. A favorable comparison in this respect is the fortress of skepticism. The Christian Church should not be committed to points of detail. The reason is obvious. Revelation begins with central truths. From first principles it descends to individual facts and phenomena. It has given a world of inferences; it has impressed unnumbered practical duties. If the plainest doctrines are found covered with dogmatism, if truth in practice becomes tarnished, it is because they have come in contact with forces adverse to their natural outworking. Science begins with the particular, and ascends to the general. From its items it deduces principles. Hence the minor facts and specialties of science may be established, while many of its generalizings may be radically wrong.

It would be the lamest logic to undertake to overthrow the facts of science from its erroneous generalized conclusions. Neither will any investigator of material facts stake his discoveries on the certainty and the absoluteness of the conclusions he may draw from them. The theoretical consequences of a thing are very lame proofs for any thing it may be in itself. To compare the results of one system, many of them abnormal, with the foundations of another, is unfair. Revelation is from God, and descends to be very imperfectly voiced in the multiplied phases of Christian doctrine and practice. Science is from man, and, with its multitude of data, it ascends toward revelation and God. For this reason, if the minor evidences of Christianity are weighed against the finished bulwarks of unbelief, a great disparity will always appear. To give some supposed difficulty with his-

tory or science the precedence over the whole mass of evidence so closely related to the Christian life itself, is to violate every law of reasoning. Any attempt to defend secondary truth as absolute and necessary to the religious system will result in harm. To magnify unimportant matters, such as the dogmas which separate the branches of the Church, or to indulge in low controversy over things of small account, only adds strength to that unbelief which began its career by breaking with the traditions of the Church.

Just views of Scripture inspiration are becoming more and more necessary. It is time to repudiate the doctrine that transforms the sacred authors into automatons. There are different styles of writing in Scripture, as there is a difference between Milton and Young, or between Bryant and Longfellow. The Pentateuch and the prophecies are dissimilar in phraseology. The utterances of Paul and the Seer of Patmos are plainly distinguished. There can be no other explanation for this fact than that the mind of the Spirit was given by inspiration to these writers, and that they were left greatly to their own resources for words and figures of speech. The form of expression in which Holy Writ is embodied is simply Oriental, and has no sacredness attached to it. The linguistic peculiarities of the Divine Word are circumstantial and not necessary. They are not evidences of its inspiration. The Hebrew and Hellenistic were not necessarily the chosen dialects of the Almighty. Language, in itself, may be immortal; but tongues and dialects are human. In course of time they metamorphose and die. "We have this

treasure in earthen vessels"—easily marred, easily broken, easily destroyed. Historical discrepancies and chronological inaccuracies may be looked for under the circumstances. I can see no reason why they may not be corrected as fast as they are found. There are very few reasons against a revision of the Word. There are many forms of expression which might be changed to suit the rightful sympathies of the age without encroaching on the rigid meaning of the text. In the historic parts of Scripture, and in the prophecies, there is much that would seem inappropriate to use in public, because of the modes of expression in which the thoughts are couched. Words once used with evident propriety are now obsolete and hardly suited to the popular ear. Many valuable lessons of the inspired Book contain words which the mutations of language have now relegated to the realms of the low and vulgar. The Bible itself is not responsible for this fact. Neither is it false modesty to shun the terse reality of these ancient utterances. Modifications are required, because, in many respects, we speak a language different from our British fore-fathers. We should not be zealous to perpetuate a fault in the taste of the English public in the time of King James and Shakespeare.

In comparative exegesis there will always be more or less of special controversy. The settling of specific objections, so far, in the history of the Church, has necessarily been left to the few. A believer may go deeper into the nature of things than is possible for the skeptic. To make the path of Christian progress smooth, to clear away the stumbling-stones, the

Church needs men of consummate skill in dialectics. The whole intellect of Zion should be utilized as well as its moral graces. Ignorance can no longer be extolled as a virtue. The full force of infidel argument is bound to come before the world sooner or later. If it first appears with its full refutation, its evident falsehood will check the glamour of its novelty. Christianity, through believers, should be able to justify its claims in the face of every attack. There should be a scientific vindication of the Bible. In this work, it will not be necessary to show that it is a text-book of science, or a manual of astronomy or geology. This is not its purpose. The object of the Word is to make known the divine will as it relates to man's spiritual interests. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and the burden of the Spirit's revealing was of far more importance than any earthly knowledge or any secular concern. Hence the argument for the truth of revelation is independent of its scientific accuracy. To vindicate the Scriptures in the face of reason is to show their purpose.

The harmony which actually exists between the Bible and the discoveries of science has often been established in view of a supposed disagreement. Yet this work is not necessary, and will not mitigate against the conclusiveness of the argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures, until the breach is actually shown. Learned unbelief is an innovation: It is opposed to the ordinary convictions of the people. Every law of logic and argument would, therefore, require it to come with facts and data, stripped from all vagaries. That the zeal of Biblical scholarship should

forestall every attempt in this direction, indicates the danger to which all false theories expose themselves. While the Scriptures may not be expected to show evidences of a knowledge of all material facts, they may be expected to add a meaning to them as fast as science discovers.

Devout men have been known to utter premature lamentations, in the suspicion that the Bible might meet some fact of experience which it could not explain. Such a thing has never been known, and need not be feared. On the other hand, those who repudiate the Bible are thrown into a chaos of inexplicable facts, such as the world might reasonably expect to be solved. Man's religious nature, the existence of sin, and similar facts of every-day experience, become the everlasting enigmas of life, in the absence of a recognized revelation.

It may be claimed, from the firmest principles, that there is an eminent fitness in the human mind for what is known as revealed truth. There are traces of natural adaptability for it in human thought and sentiment. The history of the race universally distinguishes developed from revealed truth. A lack of natural light is recognized in almost a blind dependence and submission to that which is believed to be a revelation from heaven. That which claims to be revealed always has a deeper hold on the lives of men. Developed knowledge, or that which has been discovered, is only relative. The compass, the art of printing, electricity, etc., are valued greatly for their utility. This is the measure of their value. If new discoveries should supersede and make them

useless, they could be exchanged for better appliances without many regrets. Wherever any kind of religious convictions have become so deep and settled as to influence the practice and the customs of a people, they are not often laid down without great personal struggles. Radical changes in religious views seldom come short of a revolution.

The religions of the Orient have the revealed element for their authority; and to-day, under the belief that they are divine, one-third of the human race bows in meek submission.

In one of the caves of Mount Hira, near Mecca, Gabriel, the divine messenger, appeared to Mohammed, exclaiming, "Prophet of God." Chadijah, his wife, unveiled her face, and the figure disappeared. "Glad tidings to thee, O Mohammed," she said; "it is a good angel. Thou art a prophet of God, and I am thy first believer." His son Ali was the second. Thus Mohammedanism started, with the simple theology, "There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Under the inspiration that his authority was from on high, he became a preaching soldier. Up to this time, over half a billion people have lived and died in the belief that Mohammed was the prophet of God.

These are illustrations of the power of an abiding trust in revealed principles. We have met, here, a world-wide tendency. It is apparent in all false religions having any thing of the revealed element about them. Revealed truth is the only absolute truth known to the world, and is alone fit to ask the confidence of eternal interests. The provisions of

the Gospel of Jesus Christ are most wonderfully adapted to the sympathies and needs of the soul. This adaptation secures the perpetuity of our religion, without any uncertainty.

It now appears that the divine mind has been making use of all religious systems in the firm and triumphant planting of the Gospel. All the broader observations of the times take into consideration the divine economy in utilizing ethnic religions in the mediatorial purposes of earth. They have a propædeutic office in preparing the world for the final victory of the cross. There is now a great opportunity for the cultured friends of Christianity to throw up an advance breastwork of great strength in the field of comparative reflection. In the defense of the Christian faith, our thought should reach out to a thorough study of all kindred systems. The clogs of narrowness which now bind us, and all prejudices, should give way to the recognition of truth-germs, wherever discovered.

The first elements of redemption are laid deep in the teachings of nearly all paganism. Sooner or later, there will be a mighty use made of these inlaid principles. The tactics of Jehovah are outwitting Satan, and confirming him a great blunderer. The master-stroke in the sermon on Mars' Hill was to turn the Athenian inscription, "To the Unknown God," into a present use. So God works, using false systems to fix the world's attention on important truths necessary to be known. Take, for illustration, the idea of a *sacrifice* and a *priesthood*. In almost all religions, these two elements have attained

to a degree of perfection. The worship of ancient Rome, Greece, nearly all Asia, Turkey in Europe, the barbarous Northmen, Africa, the Islands of the sea, the Western World—all have had their *sacrifices* in some form or other, through which they invoked the divine favor, or appeased his wrath. Egypt and Asia had their hoary priesthoods elevated into an unapproachable caste thousands of years ago. The Saxons and the Danes and the Vandals of the North had their grim priestly characters, through whom human victims were immolated on the altar. Druid priests danced round their lurid fires, in the vain hope that the Source of Being might accept the tortured victim. The Indians of America have their sorcerers, and their dim notions of mediation. The Aztec civilization of Mexico reared up a grand and powerful priesthood, who wielded the scepter of the gods, and held human destiny in an uneven scale.

Under the force of such ideas the world is bound by a mysterious chain. May we not conclude that God's infinite care reaches out to all his creatures, that he has a purpose running through the ages, and that, somehow or other, the wandering nations have nursed in their superstitions great and vital truths, which will, sooner or later, enable them to grasp the all-powerful provisions of the Gospel?

The office of a *priest* and the idea of a *sacrifice* are generally understood over the earth.

When we remember that Christ has become at the same time Priest, Altar, Victim, Mercy-seat, for all who seek the pardon of sin, it may not be hard to see how these tainted and marred superstitions

of heathendom may contain germs of truth which will grow and flourish when the noon blaze of the Gospel arrives. Brethren of the ministry, here is an indispensable field of inquiry. The Church, to stand, must be in possession of a culture and a Biblical intelligence, so broad and deep that it may fearlessly embrace the comparative study of religions.

There are other points, some of which, in range of discussion, are too extensive for this volume, which, when taken separately, may not be conclusive, but collectively they constitute a very strong anti-skeptical argument:

1. A comparison of the social effects of unbelief with Christianity.

2. The worthlessness of unbelief in times of danger. In private or public calamities it affords no balm, it offers no consolation. No gleam of hope shines in anywhere to light up the dark regions of infidelity. In contrast with this, the sterling value of Christianity is illustrated in the last hours of life. There has never been a phase of human adversity in which it has not fulfilled every promise and gratified the most sanguine hopes.

3. Science is not the best judge of things out of its sphere.

4. Ask for an equal good in place of Christianity. What system promises to bring such glorious and lasting fruit? Suppose the Bible should be marked with dotage and age and neglected by men. What manual of duty so broad and imperative will take its place? Where else will the circumstances of human probationship be so grandly delineated? Where else

such a combination of truths under holy precepts? Where else will be found a guide to the footsteps of men so wide, so useful, so sublime, so profound, yet so simple and plain? Where another book that grasps at the immensity of human ills, and provides for the difficulty by stretching its scepter over the realms of death?

5. Evangelical effort is a great antidote to unbelief. The late revivals in England have shaken the hoary doubts of fifty years. The vital power of Christianity is able to repress the strongest skepticism. The citadel of our faith is above all controversy. The unequivocal preaching of the Word is not to be neglected. It should be made first in importance. No obstacle should be thrown in the way of the specific power of the Gospel. The argument from reason will not depreciate or rob the infinite luster from absolute theology. While there are imperative secondary duties; while many of the plainest teachings of revelation are simply inferences, and are so clear and unmistakable that, to become heedless of their teachings is moral suicide; while we hope never to grow weary in rearranging and supervising as exigencies may require, we are to keep in mind that direct battling with abstract infidelity is not our chief business. Jesus Christ and him crucified is to be shouted across the continent unaccompanied by any suggestive doubts. Christianity is old and time-worn, and to meet unbelief in logical conflict is a subordinate duty after all. The upper regions of our theology are full of gleaming thunder-bolts, made up of the statutes of Jehovah. We labor

under the inspiration that unbelief shall not disturb the foundations of our building. It may knock off a cap-stone here and there, or tear away the weather-cock on our steeple, so that we may not know which way the wind is blowing for a time. These damages can be repaired in the course of time. As long as we are secure in our house, as long as we are sheltered from the storm, as long as we are warmed by our fire, it is not wise to listen to every fool who may tell us that we have no house, that it affords no protection or security, that our fire is an illusion. It will hardly be necessary to take up and destroy our foundation to show the dubious that it is really there.

6. In the clear understanding of Scripture the spirit and temper of the investigation figure very largely. We are required to approach with reverence if we hope to understand much of his will or his ways, or in any measure profit by them. It is a law of chemistry that there are no affinities unless the conditions are right. An egg or an acorn, under certain conditions, shows the development of a germ. If any one disbelieved the existence of germs in the egg and acorn, the evidence could not be given by placing both under the same conditions. One would require warmth, the other must be buried in the soil. A refusal to grant these conditions would be unreasonable. This law of conditions holds good in the spirit-world. God has never yet stooped to have a controversy or a quarrel with his creatures.

Lastly, the work should not be strictly controversial; should not lack of sympathy for unbelievers. Paul was once an unbeliever. He reflected and rea-

soned, then doubted, and finally believed. Some of the head-lights of the Church have hesitated for a time. Honest doubt is the very soul of investigation, for which an honest argument is nearly always conclusive. To accompany every endeavor for good with charity is philosophical. Charity is the virgin gold of our faith, which glitters though set in the world's rubbish.

CHAPTER V.

ROMANISM.

HISTORIC INFLUENCES.—A breeze from the ocean is always fresh and exhilarating. Its waters are never stagnant. No dank and foul odors are ever born of its currents or thrown shoreward by its trade winds. The reason is, God has taken charge of the ocean. It rocks to and fro in the immensity of its activities, while its particular waves are the creatures of his providence. Human perfidy can not taint it, because he has charged himself with its keeping. With the Church of Christ it is not quite so. Unwashed and fallible hands have handled its precious life until the tarnish of sin, time and again, has disrobed it of beauty.

Every student of history can recall the splendid victories of the cross during the first three hundred years of Gospel-preaching. How the Christian Church started from a little upper room in Jerusalem to wade through fire and blood, and over rack and gibbet, until a peaceful home had been won through the extent of Southern and Eastern Europe, over North Africa, through Egypt and Asia, nearly to the banks of the Ganges. The rage of infidelity and devils was unable to check its force. The proudest orators

were found lending their power to the ministry of Jesus Christ. Emperors were found worshiping at a throne of Grace. Proud temples were built, rich prebendaries were endowed. The prestige of great virtues settled on the brow of Zion. But almost with this glory came the glamour of prosperity to touch all her borders, and stop all positive advances in the restfulness of a false security. Then followed the decay of Christian life, as swift and terrible as its growth was glorious. In course of time the spiritual energies of the Church were gone. Her evangelical fires went out, and she found herself relentlessly drifting toward the vortex of universal corruption.

The first lull in the conquering energies of the Church was the saddest and the most deplorable. It not only impeded for a thousand years the further victories of the cross, but it left a history, both embarrassing in itself, and fraught with the most mischievous consequences. The papal world found its inception in the decline of vital evangelical Christianity. From the innate forces of a dying orthodoxy it was gradually developed. It crawled, serpent-like, through the ages, to position and authority. It undermined the hereditary freedom of the ancient republic by an untiring appeal for centuries.

Generations came up, and passed away, before the force of an unearthly tribunal was able to sway even a despotism of influence. The ecclesiastical heads of the old Latin Church were at first subjects. In the time of Constantine they found themselves strong enough to resist his will. Theodosius suffered

a rebuke from St. Ambrose, and was compelled to do penance. At last the pontifical foot found itself on the neck of Rome's emperor. Roman patriotism and Roman liberty died away, and there was erected in its stead an imperialism of moral forces, so dreadful as to crush out even the hopeful individualism of the old ethnic element, and leave nothing but a blank on the face of Christendom, save the fiat of the scepter of St. Peter. This silent and almost imperceptible killing out of the Spirit, in course of time, humbled a noble nation into the stupor of a wild despair. There were a thousand years wherein Romanism held universal empire over the religious thought of Europe. And the whole realm of history gives no utterance to a more fearful despotism, or to more flagrant violations to the religious rights of man.

For this condition of things the hierarchy is not responsible altogether, because other influences were at work than those immediately religious; but it is responsible for the dying away of Roman civilization, and for the corruption which disabled the Italian kings from resisting successfully the rude and barbarous Northmen; responsible, because it has courted darkness and ignorance in the control of the masses, since it first courted favor of the Saxon kings; responsible, because the doctrinal errors of monasticism have been politic tools in the hands of the mitered priest, and the gloomy monk in his cell, to cut away every vestige of truth, untrammeled by tradition, from the human mind; responsible, because, previously, the doctrines of the confessional and absolution had begun to hold the papal world

in a tyranny so great as to weigh human destiny in its uneven balance. In its claims to absolute empire over the individual mind, it has been the persecutor of free thought. It has always shown itself restless under any other condition of things than that of irresponsible individual servitude.

Jesuitism has always labored for the destruction of personal freedom. Here is an excerpt from its Constitution: "Let each man firmly believe that those who live under obedience ought to suffer themselves to be guided by divine providence, working through their superiors, exactly as though they were a corpse, which suffers itself to be turned about in any direction, and treated in any manner you please; or like the staff of an aged man, which serves every-where and in all things him who holds it in his hand."

In the entire ritualism and working of the Roman Church, there is but little regard paid to the inherent freedom of the human mind. There is an utter disregard of any personal wish or thought. Rome, at the present time, wields a practical moral coercive power more perfect than is the exercise of any civil rule on the face of the globe. Such a sway of moral forces as was manifested in the silent submission to the decretals of the last Vatican Council can only be gained in the untiring work of centuries. Unconditional submission to ecclesiastical authority has become a matter of habitual belief. Right or wrong, no other calculation is ever made. The destiny of the damned is the only alternative. Here lies a potency, ineradicable, even in the face of the most

intelligent and serious thinking. Obedience to the voice of the Church is the supremacy of all virtue; and the glory of every adherent is to be a subject. The wonder is, that the Romish Church can occupy professedly the same ground with its whole history, when that history reveals it to be the implacable enemy of human liberty, and yet find sympathy from any thing that adds life and vitality to modern civilization. A Church which relegates to itself the innate and personal rights of man's being, which will not permit the individual mind freely to reason or reflect, whose genius is yet one with the old Egyptian and Babylonian monarchies, may be suited to some regions, may serve some purposes in the first steps of human progress, but it is certainly in the plainest antagonism with the spirit of this age, with its tendencies toward the highest individual development.

As vital religion has intensified modern civilization a hundred-fold, so Protestant Christianity has magnified the individual life, in so far that we can now take the street waif, and make of it a great character. The chief item of European history since this spirit was born, has been a revulsion and a struggle for deliverance from ecclesiastical thralldom. It needed no prophet's ken to tell that Romanism was becoming more and more the enemy of all free institutions. Every enlightened nation on the face of the globe has been made to feel that, sooner or later, it would have hard work with Popery.

The signs, at present, are more hopeful in European countries. Germany, already, has virtually

achieved a victory. Italy is politically free. Under the very eyes of the Pope, the old foundations are sliding away. Garibaldi is declaring that there is no place on earth where the Pope is so little regarded as in Rome. Popery is dwindling in all transalpine countries. The government of Switzerland shows it no forbearance. In Spain, the old concordat has been repudiated, and the alternate permission and denial of Protestant worship and schools, is evidence that opinion is slowly changing. It has a forlorn civil recognition in France. Other states of the Continent, not already free, are uneasy. The vigor of Romanism in Europe, now, is only local. The great center of former activities is giving way. The old seat of empire is trembling to fall. The last bold attempt to brace and strengthen it is not only a sin, but a blunder. It set the current in the wrong direction. It threw the white horse of the Apocalypse back on his haunches.

In the sufferings of self-defeat, she has turned her eyes westward, and caught the glimpse of a magnificent prey. For the broken scepter to be repaired, it is no hardship to wait a thousand years. The vulture, from his aerie, looks quietly down on the lamb in the fold, saying, "In my thirst for blood, you are the victim." Poor lamb! No, no! Under the leering eyes of that vulture, the lamb has marvelously grown into a lion.

Romanism and the Common-schools.—A very remote and philosophic purpose lies hidden in the universal desire to educate its children in the privacy

of its own walls. The controllers of Roman Catholic policy are shrewd in the knowledge that, side by side with the most thorough intellectual drill, the human mind may be given almost any definite religious bias; especially when the work is begun in childhood. The highest philosophical attainments, ordinarily, are not likely to overthrow preoccupied and fixed religious notions. Religious faith and literary culture are apt to be harmonized in the matured mind, when they are both acquired at the same time, and are accepted as harmonies from the same source. On this basis, principles may be perpetuated in the plainest contrast with modern enlightenment. In this way, human thought may be controlled when the present generation has passed away.

Rome seeks its devotees in the cradle, and from thence begins the work of moral deformity. A plan which proposes to hold up the scepter of moral forces by the ingraining of dogma on the plastic mind of childhood is far-reaching; and, without providential hinderances, is very sure in its consequences. It can be relied on! Hence the relentless opposition to our common-school system, where a broad and liberal culture is given, where the mind is simply developed and made strong, so that in both secular and religious affairs it may act and decide intelligently and wisely. Let the genius of our common-school system become as sacred as the flag of our liberties and the constitution of our country. Let it be defended and protected as the dearest heritage of our patriotism.

Romanism and Progressive Christian Thought.—The claims of the Papal Church in the last quarter of a century, ought to put to shame the proposition that it is not at war with modern thought. During that time it has—

1. Denied the liberty of the press and of speech.
2. It has relegated to itself the privilege to decide on the relative rights and provinces of Church and state. It has maintained that, in every conflict between the civil and the ecclesiastical, the ecclesiastical should prevail; that spiritual ends may be advanced by civil agencies; that force may be employed to carry out any plan of the Church. There is as much opposition from Roman authorities, to American notions of this question, as there is to skeptical science and infidelity. Rome recognizes no civil allegiance. It is repeatedly, and in different countries, still making daring inroads on the civil sphere, and in some cases without the shadow of permanent or even temporary benefit. All this appears to be in plain contrast with the religious and political freedom of the times.
3. The Romish Church has never relinquished its notions about the persecution and coercion of schismatics. The spirit of the old doctrine,—for the sake of uniformity heresy must be quenched, if even by blood,—is still alive.
4. Rome always has been, and is to-day, the advocate of a centralization dangerous alike to both Church and state.
5. It has implanted in the minds of its youth

servile doctrines respecting the sovereignty of a foreign spiritual potentate.

6. It offers in place of the free-flowing and buoyant life of the present, a ghostly asceticism which finds for itself a home under the cowl and in the cloister. The history of the last fifty years has brought about the conviction that personal godliness may feel perfectly at home in all the legitimate manifestations of human life. All the normal activities of man's being may be naturally adjusted to the largest and richest Christian experiences. He may partake of the labors and drink deep of the pleasures of life without being contaminated with the world's alloy. There is no necessity for a divorce of things secular and sacred.

7. From the independent development of secular affairs which has so extensively prevailed in both Europe and America in the last hundred years, Romanism has simply withdrawn itself to stand back on its ancient prerogatives, manifesting very clearly a conscious dread of all progression, except where it is placed under the surveillance of churchly officialism. Popery fears liberty or any individual move; and its aim is to crush every independent force whose tendency is to let in the universal light of truth. The private activities which have been awakened by commercial enterprise and other influences in the last three centuries have given Romanism great anxieties and much trouble with some of its populations. The light of the new illumination under which the world is now moving has made it envious and hesitating to gather its forces for a life and death struggle.

If the right of life, the right of freedom, and popular government, three principles which underlie modern civilization, shall stand secure, I do not see how Romanism can stand unless it shifts its tactics. If the genius of our institutions is to live, it will finally put an end to all dictatorship, and to all influences which propose to sway the religious destiny of the race by other than legitimate agencies. The owl and the night-hawk may enjoy the twilight, but they must hide themselves from the noonday splendors. The masses of our people are no longer the grub of papal darkness. In the face of the fact, the death of the hierarchy seems imminent. As long as belief in the Immaculate Conception is entertained, as long as a market can be found for silly tales and miracles, the scepter of St. Peter can be kept from falling. These dangerous methods, however, are sure to lose their efficiency in the presence of a free press and a free pulpit. The later plans of the papal authorities are nearly all political, and its methods are from policy. The proclamation of the infallibility dogma was a movement of desperation. It was an attempt to cork and keep above the waves a sinking ship. The old structure, with its freightage of souls, is yet afloat; but it is not safe, it needs a new bottom.

The present attitude of the Roman Church has an immediate connection with the world's future welfare, and the coming issues of Christianity. Such a connection, too, as well might awaken some public alarm. If Papal authority should ever gain a supremacy in the earth, it is very clear that Christian civilization, as it is ordinarily understood, would perish forever.

The Hierarchy is condemned in its history. When this seductive and magnificent scheme is viewed in the passionless logic of events, when we see it as it has passed through the slow and solemn ordeal of centuries, we know that its claims are unreal, that its promises have never been fulfilled. It has failed in its boasted training of the masses. Instead of educating, it crushes the faculties. Its fruit among the nations has been anarchy and the most galling despotism.

We do not charge Rome with illiteracy. Her priesthood is intelligent, shrewd, and learned. Only the hordes below it are ignorant and blindly servile. Her privileged classes are cultured in all the arts of eloquence and rhetoric. They have explored the avenues of wisdom and discovered her richest treasures. Grant the first principles of their system, and they lie intrenched behind an invulnerable logic. As a class, they are men of matchless diplomacy. They are able to touch the springs of human action. They are able to look in on the human heart, and read its divinest throbings, and offer a lure for all its desires. They can attract the wise and woo the credulous. They are pre-eminently fitted to sway a people who have been born and nurtured under their politic instructions. Not only this, but they are able to bring to bear on the yielding social life of America a great many skilled, practical appliances. In this hot and hurried life of ours, in this ambition of lust and greed, in this rush and glare of pleasure, in all the anxieties of trade, they have a specious balm for every wound.

Romish Claims to Unity.—Romanism has always claimed to be at peace with itself. Is this true? The history of the Vatican Council reveals the fact that this boasted unity exists only in opinion and name. The notable quiet within its borders finds an explanation either in a dread of Papal fulminations or in a sacrifice of personal principle and the dearest rights of independent thinking. Through the whole session of the council there was a strong minority opposed to the infallibility dogma. From this minority came a petition against it, signed by many of the strongest names of the Church. Among them was the present Archbishop of Baltimore; Kenrick, of St. Louis; Purcell, of Cincinnati; and the present Cardinal of the United States. The silent submission of such minds has given the Church uniformity. They have united in an error, and by their agreement have made it lasting. That which these men did not believe, in the honesty of their own convictions, has become a damnable heresy to disbelieve. They now give recognition and countenance to this error as it goes out with its eternal consequences. They are now the avowed and sworn advocates of a doctrine which, before it was lobbied through the assembly, they believed to be spurious.

Romish unity only appears in the shape of a vast and lifeless uniformity. To enjoy the spirit of unity in its borders, it will be required to pass through nearly the same phases of history through which Protestantism has passed in the last three hundred years. And yet there is so little hope of reformation in a Church whose head claims to be the infallible vicegerent of the

Almighty himself. A close study and application of the history of the Reformation would doubtless help purify Romanism, and lead it toward the evangelical ideal, toward a unity which must come of necessity from a higher type of Christian character. Providence has built light-houses on the hidden rocks of Latin Church history for Protestant Christianity; so in its turn it might give back advantageous impulses; for, with all its rivalries and sectarian bitterness, it is much nearer the conception of the Savior's prayer for unity.

Romanism and Modern Unbelief.—The hierarchy arrogates to itself a prime hatred for skeptical thought. Its fulminations have been hurled against the unnatural forces of religious history, with a zeal worthy a power which had not been goading them to their present position and influence by its own dark history. There is nothing more patent to the observer of events than the antithesis to Christian thought, which consists, greatly, in a spirit of revulsion against the errors and superstitions, either belonging or immediately related to the Church in its darker days. A good definition of German Rationalism would be, A supra-radical revolt of the understanding against the unwarranted supernaturalism of mediæval Church history. German education provoked a spirit of inquiry, and called out the broadest and freest observation. As soon as her brilliant minds began to look back from the vantage-ground of centuries, from the rise of monasticism, Romanism appeared to them like a vast and masterful infatuation!

and, from Luther's time down, it was soon regarded as little else than a splendid and imposing fallacy. Behind a great drama of human folly, they were unable to see a life which should not be strange to any of us.

It is very easy for men with natural inclinations against the strictures of a holy life to look on this picture, with its sad consequences, and then turn away from all the rightful obligations imposed by the Christian system. If the Reformation had not thrown a brilliant and splendid light in the face of these repudiators of Church history, they would deserve no great rebuke. They might be called the intellectual troubadours of the modern age. The close attachment which vital Christianity held to Roman Catholicism in feudal times has been adverse to its claims on all who have not been able to distinguish between the true Church of Christ and its monstrous corruptions. If the Papacy had repudiated any of its black and shameful history, Christian apology, in the face of unbelief, might appear with more convincing argument. That it has not done this may be abundantly shown.

In the fourth chapter of Decrees may be found the following:

“Neque enim fidei doctrina, quam Deus revelavit, velut philosophicum inventum proposita est humanis ingenii proficienda, sed tanquam divinum depositum Christi Sponsæ tradita, fideliter custodienda et infallibiliter declaranda. Hinc sacrorum quoque dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit sancta mater Ecclesia, nec unquam ab eo

sensu, altioris intelligentiæ specie et nomine, rece-dendum. Crescat igitur et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum, quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius Ecclesiæ, ætatem ac sæculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia; sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia."

"For the doctrine of faith which God hath re-vealed has not been proposed, like a philosophical invention, to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared. Hence, also, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our holy mother, the Church, has once declared; nor is that meaning ever to be departed from, under the pretense or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them. Let, then, the intelligence, science, and wisdom of each and all, of individuals and of the whole Church, in all ages and all times, increase and flourish in abundance and vigor; but simply in its own proper kind, that is to say, in one and the same doctrine, one and the same sense, one and the same judgment."

This commits Rome to her whole history, and is offered in confirmation of her most perverse and radically erroneous Scripture interpretations, such as would knock the underpinning from all science.

In the same decree, with a show of tolerance in the free use of scientific facts and principles, it is understood that the Church is to hold over them the infallible "thus far, and no farther." "Sed justam hanc libertatem agnoscens, id sedulo caveat, ne divinæ

doctrinæ repugnando errores in se suscipiant, aut fines proprios transgressæ, ea, quæ sunt fidei, occupent et purburbent;" "but, while recognizing this just liberty, it stands watchfully on guard, lest sciences, setting themselves against the divine teaching, or transgressing their own limits, should invade and disturb the domain of faith." If facts conflict with Church tradition, so much the worse for the facts. Conclusions of science, which present any antagonism to this tradition, are not offered the respect of even a reasonable refutation, but are unconditionally condemned without investigation.

This position in the Papal Church caused the first break between religion and science. The friendship was broken as soon as scientific research had enough self-respect to repel Rome's infallible dictum.

The very status of Romanism to-day involves skepticism. As a matter of faith, the masses of the Church have no personal knowledge of the Bible. As a matter of faith, the teachings of the priesthood are accepted without question. There is no doctrine held by the laity of that Church that is not held with the understanding that it is to be believed simply because the Pope gives it his sanction.

The common tide of Papal thought is simply passive, like the waters of a great river. The teachings of this monarch Church are not given because of any inherent evidences of their truth, or because there is an indubitable basis of resting either in nature or revelation, for the mind of the receiver, but simply through the will of the Pope. It takes away all interest in the fact that truth may be known

in the common mind because of itself. If there be such a thing as universal skepticism, this opens the door-way. Thousands of restless and powerful spirits of the present time consider themselves simply emancipated from a great negation when they have repudiated the obligations of Romanism; and from this step there is an easy descent to the abrogation of all bonds, whether of sympathy or thought, with the Christian system. The priest a juggler, and his professed religion a fable, are stepping-stones to infidelity already worn by the passing of thousands of sad souls in search of truth. The condition of European society is proof of this fact. Take out the Protestant element, wherein a living faith mostly rests on a personal examination of the Word, and two classes will comprise nearly the entire population: the adherents of Rome and intelligent rationalistic infidels.

Political Ambitions—The guardians of American liberty have due cause to keep a vigilant eye on the powerful presence of Romanism. The Pope is yet demanding the right to determine for himself the sphere and province of his own activities; and the whole Roman world, by the Vatican Council, has been irrevocably pledged to support his decisions. Suppose there be no present fears of this claim; suppose it is never granted under present surroundings. It can yet be made the basis of the remotest political purposes. There is evidently great hope in the Papal Church of supremacy by secular diplomacy. Every movement of the secret controllers of Roman Catholic policy in the last twenty-five years has only set in

letters of clearer light the hopes of re-establishing, if even by physical force, the terrestrial scepter of St. Peter. Their vain struggle with Germany, and their stubborn yielding to all the States of Europe which have attempted the assertion of any independent civil rights, are intimations that they intend to cling to the old thread-bare dogma of civil subordination to the ecclesiastical. Else why contend in all these desperate cases of later history. There is certainly no hope of success for the present.

And yet this arrogance implies a conscious power. The Papal authorities seem to be acting on the plan that, if they should fail to gain their ends in a thousand successive struggles, they intend to persevere in the same vindictive assertion of rights, and in the same stern contention for a necessary doctrine. Then, if ever the way opens out, if ever the road to civil dominion becomes barely passable, the greatest authority which may be assumed at such a time will be entirely consistent with their history, and they can, then, with a show of reason, maintain that the world ought not complain. Rome's present status and belief has prepared the world to accept the utmost limits of its claims without astonishment, if it is ever able to execute them. It is waiting, now, Micawber-like, for new developments to bring their advantages, for the civil and social changes of history to open out ways and opportunities. It is, evidently, now aiming at every balance of power, wedging into every breach, patiently waiting with almost unbounded faith in the future. The reconquering of Germany, the capture of America, the reclaiming of Greek Christianity, the

planting of the cross over the crescent of Mohammed, the scepter of St. Peter over China, the submission of South America, the downfall of all institutions which are in any way opposing forces. Aye! in this faith is the full hiding of its power.

While making use of outward circumstances as they appear, one after another, it is marshaling its hosts, closing up its ranks, preparing for an emergency, though it knows not what that emergency will be; having in remembrance that the heritage of power which it gathered to itself out of the womb of the dark ages it is yet able to wield with almost a moral omnipotence. This is more significant in connection with the last bold act to deepen and drive home the doctrine of unconditional submission to the will of the Pope. It brings into view the possibilities of a most fearful spiritual despotism. It is the measure of a political force ready to be exerted at the opportune time to gratify an ambition as insatiable as the grave. What else can it signify? A problem is here presented to American statesmanship, fraught at once with great interest and great danger; for, as sure as the sun shines, the open policy of Romanism is in direct antagonism with American institutions and American Church-life. It has never permitted liberty to live for an hour where it could destroy it. It has taken the side of despotism in all the revolutions of Europe. The spirit of carnage, of anarchy and old night, still hangs to its garments as when it shed the blood of the reformative fathers.

The spiritual potencies of Romanism in civilized Europe and America can never hope, by honest

evangelism, to become comparatively more powerful than at present. The irreligious element of the population of the United States, particularly, is greatly under the evangelical agencies of Protestantism. The Papacy evinces no great concern about its spiritual power lately. It has stepped down from a domain of enduring power, and has become involved in political strife, and brought upon itself the ill will of nearly all civil governments. The priesthood has cast the ultimatum of Papal supremacy in the uncertain scale of human prowess. Our danger is not in its religious teachings, but in the fact that these teachings are made the stepping-stones of secular aggrandizement.

One of the bishops, lately writing to the Pope, says: "Within twenty years this Protestant heresy will come to an end. If we can secure the West and the South, we can take care of New England. All that is needed is money and priests to subjugate the mock liberties of America." The *West!* That means the valley of the Mississippi. The region of country from the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains, and from the lake States almost to the gulf. The world's garden, containing greater resources of wealth and power than any other equal territory on earth. Inhabited by a people who are inspired with the heraldry of the plowshare, who love free thought and liberty better than they love their lives, who only need to become alive to the policies of a foe to put an end to its designs forever.

The *South!* Many priests, with resources, have gone to take possession of the black race. If Rome

succeeds in her Southern policy, if the coveted prize is ever gained, she will sway the destinies of this nation. God pity us, and save us from our lethargy, if we ever let this thing come to pass. Though a remote and needless possibility, it will surely be followed by the downfall of our civilization, by the burial of all freedom and all intelligence. We shall be ruled by a religious absolutism powerless to save, but mighty to drag us to the deepest degradation, to the skepticism of despair. We shall find a Church recognizing no relation to the state but that of subjection on the part of the latter. A government under ecclesiastical control is powerless to remold life and society. The secular arm was never interposed for spiritual support without being enervated, and without degrading Christianity in the eyes of the reasonable world. Rome has never committed herself to any legitimate channel of Christian labor, has never agreed to keep her hands off the helm of state.

An excerpt from the *Catholic World*, of 1870, shows plainly her theory of government: "The Church does not and can not in any degree favor liberty, in the Protestant sense of liberty. . . . While the state has rights, she has them only in virtue and by permission of the superior authority, and that authority can only be represented through the Church."

Now, then, let us be reasonable in our hopes and our fears; neither idle in our self-confidence, nor frightened over sporadic and abnormal phenomena which do not affect the great laws of opinion and progress. Romanism is likely to be defeated in its

most insidious and matured plans. An imperial race of freemen is organizing its intellect and religious thought, and concentrating it in public life.

There are, now, a great many evidences of stability. We are fast approaching a great brotherhood of interests, which is precipitating upon the Churches the arduous work of unifying this great people, and of keeping the altar-fires of pure and undefiled religion burning, like vigils, until the night is over.

At the same time, let us keep our eyes open enough to see that a want of diligence in the Protestant world will bring disaster and defeat. In these times, it is not safe for Protestantism to trust to the impetus it has gained, or to its recuperative force. It is not safe to smile down or browbeat a threatening evil; but rather, in Christian love, to struggle against it with heart and hand; exaggerating no evil, preaching no despair, showing no ill-will, proclaiming no persecution. Keeping on the safe side, rather, becoming wise as serpents.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNSOLVED RELIGIOUS PROBLEM.

CHRISTIANITY has been allied to the civil authority almost from its inception. The organic connection of the civil and the religious, with a few exceptions, has been the invariable rule since the third century. This state of things found its origin, doubtless, in the old Jewish Theocracy. If, in the only government over which the Almighty exercised immediate and personal supervision, the civil and the ecclesiastical codes were not only combined, but made one for a final purpose, why should not the nearest approximate to this caste of government be most pleasing to God, and bring with it the greatest wealth of human happiness.

This view is very plausible until a few distinctions are made :

1. The Hebrew government, as an institution, was not in the natural order of events.
2. It was not established for an ordinary purpose and object.
3. The Jewish economy was a special interposition, intended to bring about such of the divine plans as would probably fail if left to the operation of free and contingent causes.

4. The fundamental principle of the Jewish constitution was purity of worship; and only because Jehovah was King, and in no danger of error, was it guarded by penal statutes,

5. It was a divinely organized and divinely prosecuted code; and has never been offered in the revealed Word as the type or ideal of government having ordinary ends in view. The Christian world is in no way bound by its forms and its penal and ecclesiastical relations.

Since the Christian era, there have been three distinct phases in the history of the relations of Church and state, in which the mind of the world has been alternating. It is well known that there was no organic connection in the apostolic age. For nearly three hundred years state authority was the implacable opposer of the growth of Christian principles. There was a predisposition against religion, strong enough to invoke the subduing force of empires. The early disciples had no authority but that of the lowly Nazarene, no civil power to protect, not even civil justice to shield them. The Church came down from heaven a stranger, with both opinion and authority against it. That grand commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," had certainly been of no avail unless he had taught them the primary lesson, "The kingdom of God is *within* you." You are poor and unlearned and powerless, but the germ of a divine conquest is among you. Rome will not relax its persecutions. The wedded influences of idolatry and state authority will struggle against you until they are converted.

This impalpable force with which I have endowed you, and all whom I shall commission to preach, will sooner or later awe the world into the courtesy of a recognition. *The success of the Church in the first ages was due to the devout lives of the early Christians.* Godliness, deep-seated in the heart of every follower, gave the Church its triumph. It ushered in what is known as the great age of evangelical Christianity, which lived and gained a victory because of a great conviction of its truth, and of its ability as an agency to mitigate and destroy the woes of humanity.

In course of time the Church saw darker days. Human ambition transformed a successful and comparatively pure Church into the perversions and falsehoods of a religious oligarchy. Sagacious and unscrupulous men placed themselves in high ecclesiastical authority. Then it began to be claimed for the infallible keys of St. Peter, that they might unlock, for the kingdoms, the blessings they had sought in vain for ages. By the slow magic of deception, bishops were at last transmuted into the vicegerents of God, and all things were declared subject to their imperial diction. Local statutes, state laws, petty kingdoms, empires,—all were made obedient servants of the Church in her plans and purposes. This is the second phase which the relation of Church and state took upon itself in history, an idea which swayed the whole Christian world for a thousand years. So deep a hold did it find in human opinion that Rome, as late as 1852, felt safe in placing the following in the infallible syllabus of errors: “Ecclesia

a statu, statusque ab Ecclesia sejungendus est;" "the Church should be separated from the state, and the state from the Church."

To the Romish notion of the ecclesiastico-political problem may be charged much of the corruption of the ancient Church, and the final weakness of the Latin people, and the superstition and savage life which followed, crushing out all existing civilizations. It must answer, also, for that indifference which allowed the rites of paganism to be transferred to Christianity, which allowed the Bible to be hid from the commonalty, which placed the gloomy monk in his cell, rather than the zealous evangelist among the people.

The hand of God was reaching out of heaven to help the nations, when Luther took that old Bible which was chained to his cloister wall, and taught its contents to the people. From the valleys of Piedmont came an answering shout. The dayspring from on high was heralded abroad, and it came, welcome as the sun upon a Greenland night. A reinvigorated life spread like flame in dry stubble. The slumbering religious fires of four hundred years were rekindled in the blowing of a heavenly atmosphere, and Christianity was about to be enrobed in a vesture of gold.

In the beginning of the Reformation, the rights of individual conscience were presented in strong opposition to the hierarchy. Individual right was magnified in all the tendencies of reformative thought. This could not help but powerfully aim at the overthrow of the ancient order of things, which never

took the individual man into question. An entire disregard of personal right was the supremacy from which the old spirit overshadowed and dwarfed society. Luther's work was a private enterprise, and the occasion from which the evangelical spirit of religion gave promise of clear sailing by drifting beyond all breakers. But after the new movement had gone on for a time, apparently free from all extraneous forces, impressing its own inherent life on society; after Luther had accomplished his work and gone to the grave,—so severe was the struggle with Popery, it seemed almost a necessity that Protestant princes should take the Reformed Churches under the protection of the state for security. Thus, in the readjustment and resettling of opinion, the organic relation of Church and state still remained; yet it assumed a new form. As an outgrowth of the Reformation, civil government was recognized as the patroness of religion. One great duty of the state was supposed to be the protection and advancement of the Church. To take all religious interests under its special control, to foster and provide for the maintenance of the Church by special legislation, was supposed to be the ideal of state loyalty to God. A transfer of allegiance was made from the Pope to the king. This theory, at present, is practically carried out over nearly all Protestant Europe—presenting the third phase which the question of Church and state has taken upon itself.

In America we have returned to the primitive order of things. Church and state, in this country, hold the same relation they did in Paul's time and

for two hundred years afterward, the ancient hostility of state authority excepted. The Church, having to do with spiritual things, has free course in all that pertains to the kingdom of heaven; the state, having to do with temporal things, as an inherent right, controls all the functions that properly belong to civil government. There is no conflict, no collision, no antagonism. The boundaries of the civil and the ecclesiastical powers are well defined; and are satisfactory, in that we have been strangers to a thousand perplexities to which Europe has been exposed in the last century.

In the formative period of American history, the transatlantic world was pervaded with the idea that to take away the legalized connection between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers would be little less than blasphemy. Immigrants to this country inherited mostly these prevailing notions. Consequently, they were only ready to perpetuate the same order of things on these shores.

While the Puritans were in search of religious freedom, it could not be expected that they should be free from all the intolerance and narrowness of the age in which they lived. They knew of no other way of supporting religion except from the public treasury. They had very crude notions of what has since been the inspiring ideal of our civilization.

The Jamestown colony was planted under the conviction that the highest function of the English government was to propagate the Gospel. A state Church, according to the usages of the Church of England, was established. The colonists knew nothing

else. Dissenters were obligated to help support the establishment. Episcopal clergymen were the only authorized ministers. Puritans and Quakers were banished under penalty. There was no limit to the authority of civil rulers either to foster or advance special religious interests. A positive sanction was given to the Bible as the revealed Word of God by most, if not all, the American colonies. Thus the *debris* of European thought drifted across the Atlantic, and threatened to ingrain itself more deeply in colonial opinion than were the ideas of dependence and subjection to the mother country.

The Revolution, fortunately, accomplished more than our independence. It gave freedom from the religious agencies of Europe. It produced a strong opposition to the English aristocracy, and to all methods, religious or civil, which would likely produce such a privileged class in this country. It was not simply a coincidence that opposition to the organic relation of Church and state began with the declaration of July. A providential blessing was wrought here, second only to our liberties. The direction in which the tide of feeling was flowing became evident from the time the declaration was issued. In the following November, Maryland made a declaration of rights, intending to dissolve all civil relation with the Church. In December a dissolution was effected in Virginia. A separation was effected soon after in the Carolinas, and several other colonies where the Episcopal Church had been established. Forty years afterward, the Episcopalians themselves united in a combination to overthrow the Congrega-

tional State Church of Connecticut. Other States in succession adopted the voluntary system, and stepped into the line of progress. Massachusetts at last cut away the excrescence of state support which had been hanging to her garments for so long, and we are now in the apostolic succession.

There have been evils resulting from the policy of the United States in religious matters. The evils of sectarianism, of extreme division of labor, and such as are incident to the starting of new Churches, perhaps would not appear under the operation of European methods. Yet these unavoidable results have often been turned to good account. The rivalry of sects has had a tendency to keep Christian life pure. The struggle of Churches in villages and towns and pioneer regions has been favorable to the highest development of Christian graces. At least there is no desire to return to the state of things in our earlier history. As our people become cultured they enjoy more and more the blessings which flow from the boundless liberty of American Church-life, and they see more clearly the evils either of ecclesiastical supremacy or immediate state support. It is a fact of some importance that the attained result has been the healthful outgrowth of Christian sentiment. It was in no sense an infidel or a skeptical movement. Thomas Jefferson, as an enemy of Christianity, very greatly aided the movement in Virginia, but he was not the principal force in bringing the work to its completion. American religious thought, casting itself into political life, silently influencing and controlling its spirit, has broken its own fetters, and has

given itself liberty and self-reliance. It has been the mission of America to demonstrate that the highest and purest type of religious life is consistent with the highest and purest form of individual freedom. The demonstration so clear and glorious is having a reflex influence in transatlantic countries, and, sooner or later, it may work a revolution. Many of the greatest minds of Europe are now desiring an overthrow of the old unnatural alliance. Germany is beating back the romanistic phase, but is not yet settled as to what is best. The eyes of the civilized world are now watching the politico-ecclesiastical problem through which she is passing. The result will be important to the world, because with every modification simply of the old order of things new difficulties appear, and no adjustment has yet given satisfaction.

Extreme Views.—A political recognition of the Christian religion in this country is of no great importance. It may not be advisable that Christianity, as distinguished from other systems, should be made the law of the land. As good a plan as any is to keep in mind the principles upon which we have acted in the past:

1. There are some things which must obtain in every society, which are not proper for the government to handle.

2. There are things with which the Church, as such, can not rightfully have any thing to do; not only because experience has shown the sad consequences of every violation, but because Christ has made it so in his teachings, "Give unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's."

Now, because there are separate and widely diverging channels of labor for the world's religious and political potencies, is there any necessity, or is it even possible, to sever all natural connection between them? Because it was not designed they should both live in the same establishment and under the same roof, is no reason why they should not live side by side on terms of intimacy and friendship. There is a factor of American thought opposed to Sunday laws, and chaplaincies in legislative halls and in the army, and to the Bible in the public-schools. The basis of the opposition is, we have proclaimed religious freedom; we have concluded to legislate neither for or against or patronize any religious sect or party. It is very true that Christianity, as an influence, has placed its signet on many of our customs and our legal and political proceedings. This state of things is to be expected in a country whose thought and sentiment is so decidedly Christian. Many deeply religious men have occupied high places at the hands of the people. The silent potencies of religion in political life have lifted some of the brightest lights of the Gospel into seats of authority, and very naturally our laws and public practices would partake of the Christian spirit. At the same time, it is almost universally conceded that, whatever is taken from the Bible and grafted into our civil code, does not find its reason or authority in the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, but on the basis of its moral right and its natural utility to carry forward the purposes of the social compact. Christian practices which find their support from the civil arm, base their right

of existence and enforcement on natural and not revealed principles. The observance of the Sabbath is a requirement of the civil law, because it has been found best for man and beast that they should have one day of rest in seven. The same day set apart by the Christian people of the country is designated by statute, I suppose, because it brings about a favorable coincidence, and enables the state to make use of the moral influences of the Church to put into operation what it considers an economic principle.

As to chaplaincies, the very spirit of devotion entered into in the beginning of a public work, presupposes a state of mind and heart the most favorable and the most eminently adapted to the transaction of the important and serious concerns of state. Our chaplaincies are justifiable on legal and philosophical principles. As to the Bible in the schools, the state is under obligation to give that sort of culture and training to its children which will produce the best citizenship. A man is not apt to make a good citizen if deprived of moral teaching in childhood. It is the duty of the state, as a matter of self-protection, not only to banish ignorance, but to teach its children those elements of truth and justice, right and wrong, to which they are expected to give obedience in taking on themselves the responsibilities of citizenship. Among all text-books for this purpose, the Bible has been found to be the best. There is no other manual of duty so broad and plain. To object to this because the Bible additionally claims to be the revealed will of Jehovah, is to carry the argument too far. Besides, if the civil power does not choose

to enforce the truth in the name of its revealed authority, the inherent right of the truth itself remains, with its abundant and overwhelming demands. It is unfortunate for a certain class of reasoners that any good at all is found in the Bible. Shall we blot from the statutes all laws relating to larceny because the divine command is, "Thou shalt not steal?" Shall we cease to legislate on the high crime of murder because there is a command, "Thou shalt not kill?" These are primary principles of the law, written in the world's great Spring-time, while our systems of jurisprudence were yet lying in the womb of history. They controlled men long before the hydra-head of infidel stateism was ever lifted. The finest legalists of the country tell us that the Roman law and the English common law and our statutory laws all find a sufficient basis in the system promulgated by Moses. Whence all this enmity? Do men suppose they can live in the blaze of modern civilization and yet free themselves from the teachings and the influence of the Bible? Its teachings are so inwoven with our institutions and our literature that it lays at the foundation of every right we possess, and every solid pleasure of life. If a man desires to cast himself beyond the majestic sweep of Bible thought, he must reach the boundaries of civilization. If a man would desire to deprive himself of the blessings which the Bible brings him, he would tear down the house in which he lives, he would remove from society the great natural fountain of its laws, its moral necessities, and its religious healings, and would turn the world back on its hinges for a thousand years. The Bible

is the granite support of American liberty. When we have lost our reverence for it we have lost our nation. Whoever hates it hates his own soul.

True Relation.—The growth of Church and state in this country has been proportionate each to the other. Charges and synods and conferences have multiplied, and new States have been added to the Union. While each has been attending to its own affairs and advancing in its own way, undisturbed by the encroachments of the other, there has been such a near relationship, such a mutual dependence, that every commotion or disturbance of the one has correspondingly influenced the other. With different spheres of operation and duty they have a common mission and the same final purpose. The ecclesiastical and civil forces of the United States are complements each of the other. It has taken them both to make us what we are. From their mutual dependence has come our prosperity. At the same time, men are not affected in their civil relations by their religious views. Religion is neither fettered nor endowed. With all the inducements of false zeal in religion, there are none in the direction of asking that it shall be upheld or propagated by the civil law of the land in the name of its sole practical utility. The American Church has undertaken to supply what it once seemed to lack by taking the lead in all social and humane enterprises, by evincing a deep concern for the poor and downtrodden, lifting them up in their humanity rather than leaving them to the feeble helps and benevolences of the state. It has claimed

the respect and veneration of mankind in the private and peaceful victories of the cross, and in the full proof that it is the world's benefactor. It has become the open and avowed enemy of all tyranny, all slavery, and all wrong; the shield of liberty, of freedom, and the fraternity of man. It has been relying on moral and spiritual rather than on secular and physical influences. It has shown itself able to grapple with the intelligent activities of the age, and has made them the conditions of success. It has been able to plant almost every element of our prosperity deep in the soil of religion. In order to see our social corruptions fade from the face of the land, it has sought to bring the sovereign people under the power of the religion of Christ. It has acted on the principle that, to give a man religion and intelligence, the ballot is safe in his hands. Religion, propagated, not by might or power or sword or authority, or through worldly motives and prospects, or fraud and craft, but by the silent and powerful influence of truth itself, attested by the Holy Spirit. As it was in the time of Christ and the apostles, the spirit-power of Christianity, when relied on, has always given it a superiority to survive earthly mutations and gain victories over sin. The cause is safe as long as there is a reliance placed on the divine side above all that is human. Our Lord and Savior never took any part in politics. He proclaimed himself distinct from any earthly ruler. He repudiates the use of force to extend his authority among men. He never made any allusion to aid from the state. The Gospel was to be preached to all people unconditionally. Neither

the help nor the consent of civil rulers was taken into account, but in the excellence of his life he taught the world that the application of his system was essential to all that was good or pure or exalted, as the result of human energy. Religion can not be made compulsory or enforced by all the legal statutes under the sun. It is taught as a principle belonging to the regions of the mind and heart and conscience, and, as such, it was born free, and can not be coerced or driven into terms. The policy of Philip with the Moriscoes, and Charlemagne with the Saxons, might produce extensive nominal results, but it would shake a great many facts and overturn the firmest principles.

The authority of the state is limited strictly to temporal affairs. Its work is to afford the same kind of liberty to believers and unbelievers without distinction. Religious equality of citizenship is the only available and practical theory in this country. The end and aim of human government is to insure the largest degree of liberty attainable by all. If any religious sect or party is permitted to become a candidate for state favor, human government is fettered in its endeavors. The highest liberty of the citizen can be guaranteed without abating one jot or tittle of the claim which God has upon a nation, and of its responsibility to secure to the individual the utmost freedom of conscience in religious affairs. The state is not to offer and afford toleration simply, but religious freedom. It is the business of the state to protect every man in the measure of knowledge and conviction to which he has attained, unless his notions should conflict with the universal laws of morality.

External means, however, used to overthrow a spiritual power, have always shown themselves signally impotent; and it is better, generally, to depend on religious truth to break down religious falsehood. This policy is that of the government toward Mormonism, and it is likely to be effectual. The Gospel has found its highest triumph where investigation has been unfettered, where thought has been free, and where it has been permitted to depend on its own divinely invested resources for success. Christianity, in fact, lays the only true foundation for the highest freedom. It advocates the brotherhood of man and an equality of rights. It develops the highest type of manhood. It ministers to the wants of the poor and the distressed. It checks the ravages of ambition by endowing the soul with the holiest motives. It never despairs of lifting the great masses of earth from the degradation into which they have fallen. The religion of the Gospel is in perfect accord with whatever elevates or purifies or ennobles, and its sublimest examples are to be found among the freest, most civilized, and enlightened people of the globe.

CHAPTER VII.

TEMPERANCE.

AS the organic Church of Christ is intimately related to the morals of a people, wherever its work has free course, it becomes, in a great measure, responsible for the condition of society. The world has come to regard the Church as a kind of physician, invested with radical cures for the most enormous social evils, and expects that it will at all times throw its whole influence on the side of its own inspired teachings. Any plain question of right or wrong involves its members in a responsibility to accept and defend the better part. The ideal Church is equal to all the exigencies of time; but the real Church has often found itself powerless before the tides of corruption coming up from the sea of human life which it has undertaken to control.

There are always certain evils attending conditions of culture which statesmen have designated as evils of civilization. Monstrous corruptions have often followed in the wake of science and art and refinement. Intellectual development and material progress, while they elevate, they open out facilities for crime unknown to an age of barbarism. These civilized evils are the most dangerous foes of the human family.

Then, again, there are inherited vices following a race from its first rude beginnings into the highest path of its progress, refining with its refinement, and settling down like a canker in its life. Intemperance is a vice of this kind. It prevailed among our Anglo-Saxon forefathers. There was a time when the ale-houses among them were almost sacred. The grog-gery is now known wherever the race is. The Medes took advantage of this propensity more than two thousand years ago, and gave them a defeat. From the same cause, it is said, William of Normandy gained the battle of Hastings. With this fact before us, consider how great the reform. It is not the part of true piety, however, to grow faint before the immensity of the work. The reform has already attained to national dimensions. The most serious thought of the wise and considerate of the land is being laid under tribute.

What shall be the influence of civil society in enforcing temperance principles? How can individual rights and the rights of property be secured, and, at the same time, sustain moral truth? These questions have been answered in the accepted principle that, whatever may be the occasional loss to the individual, society has a right to protect itself. Another question has superseded these as of prime importance at the present time. How shall society conserve its influence, and present healthful features in the work of moral reform? The solution of this problem of social ethics will demand the research of the maturest wisdom. It has bewildered Christian statesmanship. It can not be solved like a problem in mathematics

with a demonstrated result. Hence it is not strange that a conflict of opinion should arise here, and should give promise of becoming very serious in its magnitude. Our whole people, however, are earnestly deliberating, and we may trust them for a final solution. In the mean time, the issue is of great moment to every lover of sobriety and virtue. The best methods of reform are yet invested with uncertainty. One thing, however, is certain, ready relief is not permanent cure. While it is urgent, if possible, to mitigate the immediate woes of intemperance, it is not the part of true wisdom to suppose that the fountain is thus sealed; it is not the part of true faith to be content with such a momentary surcease from its sorrows.

There is only one definite policy for the Church of God in this, as in relation to all other social evils. Proceed on the assumption that they come up from adverse principles deeper than the evils themselves; that they all have an underlying basis in a common race degeneracy. This will keep us to the old way-marks, and help us to labor under the inspiration that the world is to receive an infinite purging before it is made pure. There are likely to be dangerous issues in every moral reform movement. A good many sordid and unscrupulous interests are apt to gather around it. It is in danger of being estimated as a political force, and of becoming a factor in the calculations of the demagogue. Temperance is purely a moral question. There is no doubt concerning it. Universal morality recognizes it as right in itself. For any set of men to declare in

favor of inebriety, would be as radically wrong as to declare in favor of theft and murder. Naturally, temperance can have no political force except that of an influence. There is danger and bad philosophy in bringing moral questions into political life in any other sense. Until truth is more deeply ingrained in society, moral issues (issues in which evidence for their right and existence is all on one side) should never be hinged on the decisions of the ballot-box. The ballot-box is only indirectly philanthropic. It is not the immediate source of moral regeneration. It is only the reflector, the mouth-piece of opinion. If it had any higher authority, there would be less danger in leaving to its decisions any question of right or wrong. The ballot in the hands of the people has given us great glory; but it is not the panacea for all ills. It has its appropriate sphere, within which there is no more sacred right given to man. A great many things can be accomplished by the ballot—not every thing. The Gospel and human experience teach the world the truth that society can never be raised *ab extra*, can never legislate itself into better morals. The civil law can never reform society; it can only protect from the consequences of sin. This is its object and aim. It holds in check existing evils, until the proper influences can be brought to bear for lifting society. Among these influences, more than all others, is the religious toning of public virtue under the guidance of agencies which Christianity alone inspires. The law meets present exigencies; it closes the hatches, keeps down the fire—never puts it out.

Temperance should enter into the domains of statesmanship, just as truth or liberty or justice enters, and like them should be kept aloof from the issues of the political campaign. Sad will be the day when a party shall be found to espouse the negative, and make it an issue. A temperance party is a moral monopolizer. It is about as foreign to the political field as a Church members' party would be, advocating a legislation to coerce men into its pales. If a party should appear having Jesus and the resurrection for its central plank, and enter the lists for official honors, men would stand aghast! Yet it would be but the violent phase of what the first is in tendency. A moral virtue should never be brought into favor through the success of partisanship, should never be offered for the patronage of men, much less their suffrage. To compromise truth in the absolute is to send it begging, and rob it of its potency.

The difficulty is not now greatest in the direction of the law; hence the conflict is not first in political life. If the core of the fruit is rotten, it is but child's play to pick the specks from the outside. The harvest of human wishes seldom comes, except as the result of adequate toil and sacrifice. Sin can never be ultimately repressed by main force. Its roots go deeper than the plowshare of human authority. The law itself becomes corrupt before it reaches the source of evil. We can not invent a machine to do our work. The mighty task must be wrought out through moral and religious influences. The

burden must be borne by those who are never weary in well-doing. In the elevation of the race there is no alchemy by which good, faithful souls can be excused from the labor of love and the agony of prayer.

Permanent reforms grow from within outward. Society is never lifted momentarily from its thrall-dom. The growth of better principles inheres from constant and steady relations, which are slow, but satisfactory. There is a kind of popular philanthropy abroad, which divests Christianity of specific precepts. It comes with its heart full of virtue, with the bounds of its affection extended and generalized for the common good. It becomes rapturous over that definite and glorious object, man in the abstract. A beautiful theory! A polished machine of perpetual motion! The only objection to it is, it will not work. A reign of sobriety demands at our hands the regal potencies of an individualizing labor. God forbid that we should ever turn from it to seek the hasty gilding of a momentary political victory.

These late and easy ways of reforming society, by the enactment of appropriate laws, are not very satisfactory. They mistake effects for causes. The wish could only be father to the thought that the laws of a country primarily shape its opinions, when directly the reverse is true. Generally, legislation has kept pace with the progress of opinion in this country; and, as long as moral and Christian convictions are voiced in the private ballot, the

same state of things may be relied upon for the future. Rather than have principles overturned, and facts shaken, we can well forego a fleeting triumph. Our first and greatest and lasting need is, more faith in the power of Christianity to meet every exigency in the social life of America.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIESTHOOD OF THE PEOPLE.

IN the Jewish Temple worship there was an Outer Court, for the Hebrew masses, a Holy Place, where the priests only entered to offer the daily sacrifice, and then there was a Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant rested, where the Shekinah shone, and where Cherubim kept watch over the Mercy-seat. The veil of entrance to this holy place was drawn aside once a year by the high-priest; and then only with the strictest observance, and with trembling and awe, lest the dread majesty of Jehovah's presence be insulted. The common people were never permitted to enter the sacred inclosure. No unauthorized hand ever lifted the veil which hid from the common eye the mysteries of the inner sanctuary. But when Christ expired on the cross, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain—a significant fact!

As the coming of Christ put an end to the Jewish economy; as he offered himself a sacrifice, once for all, for the sins of the world; as he becomes to us, in his mediatorial character, a priest and Savior, thus requiring at our hands no human mediation,—it is not a far-drawn inference that the torn Temple veil should be the symbol of a world's free access to

a throne of grace. Christ, in his suffering and death for the sins of men, besides making atonement for sin, abolished the Levitical Order, took upon himself the character and duties of high priest, and conferred all subordinate work of the priestly office without distinction upon the people at large. Hence we understand Peter when he says, "Ye, also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And, also, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." In this connection the ascription of St. John the Divine is likewise significant: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Every man his own priest, the builder of his own confessional, is a true doctrine, because of the relation of Christ to the individual. An intense individualism pervaded the apostolic Church.

Salvation by faith and a priesthood of the people were central thoughts in the Reformation. As soon as Luther gave them a foothold the shackles of Popery fell from an enslaved world. No minister is a priest in any distinctive sense. There is no technical priesthood now. The Anglican family of Churches would better deserve the name of Protestants if the reformation had been more thorough in their borders. A ministering people, with Christ for a leader, is the world's conquering force. All are called to live and to work for God and his Church. In all the primitive Churches outside of Syria, forms of Church govern-

ment were only matters of expediency. They did not hold themselves under obligation to the customs of Jewish worship. Yet it is well known that every pious Jew might teach. In the early Church all capable believers might teach. Discipline belonged to the people. The sacraments were not a monopoly. The right of the laity to baptize was recognized. We have St. Ambrose for authority that all taught, all baptized.

But the time came when it was not right for all to *exercise* their rights. As the apostolic Churches grew in numbers and in influence, partial delegation became necessary to orderly procedure. This partial delegation did not renounce the inherent right. In the divine economy it is just as necessary that things be done decently and in order as that they be done at all. It is here as in the social compact. The individual foregoes certain rights for the good of society, and in return receives the blessings and protection which society secures. Individual rights are held in abeyance. In the Church, that which inheres in the individual in the majority of cases is surrendered to be exercised by the few, in order that the common Church may not be torn by dissension or defeated in its purposes by a confusion of elements. This is the authority by which a holy Church may set apart a holy ministry. The Spirit never violates this fundamental fact when He calls his workmen to the walls of Zion. The people are not robbed of that with which they were divinely invested. They are called upon to make a voluntary dedication of authority, or, in other words, to make a division of labor in view

of greater harmony and success. The setting apart for a sacred work those whom the Spirit has designated is a moral obligation resting on every true Church. On the other hand, this recognition of the Church ordinarily becomes a part of a true call to the ministry. The only exceptions are where the great laws of harmony will not be violated.

The modern error is in endowing the ministry with an official sanctity, a kind of supernal sacredness to which the laity has no right to aspire, when there is no inherent ecclesiastical distinction whatever. One great and blessed outgrowth of the Reformation was the absolute parity of individual membership in the Church. This implied the deliverance of the laity from the entralling rule of the clergy. An unmeasured advantage would speedily be gained if the broadest possible privileges should be granted to laymen in the teaching of the Divine Word.

The regular ministry can not do the work necessary to save this land from the flood-tides of immorality and corruption sweeping over it. It has come to pass that every ransomed talent must be brought up to its utmost capability. The indwelling of grace is not given for a selfish end. The Christian heart is not only a depository of sweet influences, but a fountain of running waters, sending forth a stream of spiritual refreshment. It inheres in man's nature to become a positive force in every new relation of life. Negative souls never reach the purposes of their creation. Unless the positive impulses of our being find vent in some form, life is a failure. Personal Christian growth depends very greatly on a free and

untrammeled exercise of every new-born desire for the progress of the kingdom. For the same reason that the Church should be aggressive, so should the individual Christian. The teachings of political economy hold good in the spiritual realm. The policy for securing new laborers is in the distribution of what we have. The power of the Church might be augmented almost infinitely if its private members would study their own fitness for an appropriate work. The departments of labor may be found as various and multiplied as in any field of human activity.

In the adjusting of specific departments of labor, the civil world has learned with greater aptness than the religious. Only in the rudest stages of social development do men combine in themselves all trades and professions. The savage is his own tailor and shoemaker, his own carpenter and blacksmith, his own lawyer and physician. The first step toward development and progress is toward adjusting these occupations and pursuits to the individual in society rather than confining them all to the solitary faculty of a single man. The Church finds a difficulty in applying this universal law of labor. If it could be brought to its full force a thousand-fold would be added to religious energies. It appears that the private membership of the Church is not giving enough attention to religious affairs. Many have a name to live without being impressed with the personal responsibilities of a Christian. They have no fixed notions, no definite purpose. Their religious lives, with all their relations, are simply generalized. They represent a desultory, drifting, shiftless sort of Christianity.

A hap-hazard religious business always leads to moral bankruptcy. A great potency for lifting Zion from the dust lies wrapped up in our personal inactivities and neglect of privileges. The divine ideal of a perfect priesthood of the people is every man in his own place, doing his own work, recognizing the perpetual fact that God calls men to *preach*, and he calls them to *duty* as well. The business of a layman is sacerdotal. He is not of the world, but in it, bearing wherever he goes a divine commission. He is called equally with the highest ecclesiastic to exemplify in his life, that most sacred of all practical truths, "No man liveth to himself."

CHAPTER IX.

AMERICAN MINISTRY.

A LIVING ministry is God's chosen instrumentality for the evangelism of the world. Unless the divine mind has blundered, the preaching of the Gospel by living men will never be superseded by any other agency.. The seeds of the Gospel are to be planted and nurtured by the Gospel herald. A consecrated ministry to save the world is what God wanted when he said, "Go . . . preach the Gospel to every creature." "Go proclaim the glad tidings; go shout, like Jonah on the walls of Nineveh. Tell to the nations the story of the cross, and leave it with them. Go preach, regardless of results, and, sooner or later, like the utterances of the babbler on Mars' Hill, it will cause the parthenon of sin to tremble and fall, and bury in its ruins the most brilliant of human philosophies." The foolishness of preaching will kill every theory that opposes it. The sneer of philosophy at the cry of the Gospel herald is its death knell. The voice of a living man before a living people has a potency about it unequaled by the force of any other agency.

Men talk of the press superseding the necessity of the preacher only when they are beside themselves.

Especially in this country, where we have the mightiest ministry known to the world, made so under the greatness of an unmeasured responsibility. Heroic deeds are the measuring of heroic souls. The American ministry has kept pace with our great civil system, so rife with intelligence and industrial enterprise. Liberty has been our battle-field. Truth has found a receptive soil. Conditions have been favorable to the fostering of the purest faith. Under such circumstances, preachers of the Word have been prompted by the necessity of moral worth, and have had opened to them channels through which their influence has been felt in all classes of society. The uncultured countryman and the man of letters stand side by side and bear evidence to the same love. As there is a great separation in the advantages of life, so there is a great difference in the tone of the ministry by which men are brought to repentance. There is a sharp form of thought by which the cultured are attracted and led into the paths of peace. Then there are direct and obvious arguments; there is a plain statement of results commanding itself to a sound understanding, which attracts and wins great masses of our people, where metaphysical and subtle distinctions of doctrine are gratuitous offerings, for they are never appreciated. Faith in God, manifest in a pious life, is about the whole of theology.

There have been men of talent and learning in the Church. There have been utilized to a grand purpose men without talent, and without learning, as well. Both classes may reflect the light of the Spirit. Thought and feeling are united in one case, feeling

and earnestness in the other. The Spirit's testimony does not separate between the learned and the unlearned, but between the believer and the unbeliever. There are no castes in American society. There are no aristocracies of rank or station that the masses are willing to recognize; yet there are great distinctions to be discovered. Our whole people are united by general and not so much by personal bonds. There is a kind of social friction between the East and the West, between the North and the South, between the town and the country. In the adaptation of our ministry there should be due respect to these class feelings. The peaceful homes of the country, and the cottages of the poor, should not be sacrificed to the whims of high life. The eagle is not fit to lead a flock of wild ducks in their migrations through the sky. The antelope of the prairie would not go up and make its home with the ibex of the mountain. An inhabitant of Venezuela would not make a good missionary to the Laplanders.

While sudden and radical changes of social atmosphere may prevent the destruction of the homogeneous element in society, they often produce the most extreme antagonisms. To borrow a figure, the ministry is an instrument of light to the world, just as a window gives light into a room. Here is a pane, without a flaw, admitting rays of light without any change in direction, without destroying their intensity. That is the polished preacher, a shining shaft in the quiver of the Lord. Here is another pane; the light of the sun through it is blurred with a thousand aberrations. The rays cross each other in

confusion. It transmits nothing but light. This is one of our rough, unhewn ministers, a man who has had a preparation of grace for a mighty work, a great, uncultured blunderer; but converted—on fire with divine love. The light of the Holy Ghost shines through him somehow or other; men see the light, and are constrained to walk in it.

Where our teachers and professors and lawyers and statesmen go to church, send our cultured men of God, men who can adorn the depths of piety with the jewels of a polished rhetoric and with the sublimest eloquence. In more sparsely settled regions, where society is yet in its formative state, send our zealous sons of thunder, men whose enthusiasm and pathos make their listeners weep.

As there is a sphere for every man in the world, there is a notch for every preacher. As there has been but little clashing of interests in the past, there need be no serious conflict in the future. It is not the name, but the work of the minister, that should be perpetuated. “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? . . . And the eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.”

The jaunty little evangelist who may be able to sally forth and get up revivals, and start pioneer societies, is not to be despised, for his work is of God; and *he* should not therefore assume that those who have never engaged immediately in this work

have been failures. The Church in this country is in no more need of new additions than a higher type of piety. Men who are able to present the finer distinctions of moral truth, who are prudent administrators of discipline, are doing a far more important work than those who simply gather into the fold.

While God in his wonderful economy has utilized men with but few opportunities of personal culture in the past, it is not so much so now. Neither will it be so in the future, because not necessary. Knowledge is becoming wide-spread, creating a kind of intolerance for superficial notions from the pulpit, and a dislike for the hasty gilding of that which has depth and power in it. Whatever God may have wrought through illiterate men in the past, he is now placing a reward on thorough scholarship. Whoever would stand firm now must put himself to some trouble in preparation, and prove his fitness. There is now a great demand for men who are able to make Christianity consistent with the new lights constantly appearing in the canopy of knowledge, men able to discern false analogies, and present arguments equal in power to those of other professions.

The world is getting full of readers, in every branch of learning, who are no longer to be entertained and instructed with commonplaces from the pulpit. Whoever feels called to the ministry of God should keep in mind that there has a generation grown up since our whole territory was dotted with school-houses, like stars in the firmament. While engaged in historical and Biblical research, he should remember that there are millions of children in our

Sabbath-schools, who know as much theology at ten years as our fathers and mothers at twenty; also, that the next generation will not likely tolerate ignorance in the pulpit. A minister should not only be thorough in his department, but should be versatile in all that interests men in favor of the truth. Biblical exegesis alone will not answer every demand now. He must extend his researches, enlarge his opinions, broaden his views, and aim at the highest things. He shall not secularize the pulpit, nor draw it away from its exclusive and specific mission, but intensify its power. He shall not liberalize the Gospel, nor extend its prerogatives beyond the divine charter, but he shall utilize public opinion and human philosophy, to speed the progress of a single idea, "Jesus and the resurrection."

Unless this is done, piety and learning, heart and head, will be divorced. Religion will be left to the ignorant and superstitious, and learning will be turned over to infidelity.

A minister, to be useful at this time, must identify himself with the interests of his fellow-men. It will never do to get frightened at the world, or to look solemn and supernaturally wise at all the natural joys of life. The swift-flowing Anglo-Saxon blood in our veins is leading us into new relations and surroundings, calling out new sympathies and new phases of life, and causing the stiff Puritanism of the time to stand aghast. Simply because there are undue tendencies to this spirit, it is neither expedient nor necessary to check its natural and harmless outworkings. Religion is not hostile to any of the

legitimate manifestations of human life. God hates nothing but sin.

Christian life is not bound by a set of juridical statutes, to whose iron limits every act of life must be chained. Many acts of life which are recognized by the Divine Word, and which arise from the natural constitution, have no immediate moral or religious bearing. That rigid notion of life which supposes that every thing which does not work an immediate moral good must be wrong, and therefore denounced, robs the human heart of all spontaneous activity. Through these mistaken views there is often an ugly and doleful shadow thrown over the most sterling virtues, and the voice of religion is made to sound like a voice from the sepulcher. The free, bounding movement of mirth and tenderness is not obliged to give a moral account of itself; it needs no justification. The highest type of piety brings with it the highest type of freedom.

Do not misunderstand. A preacher is not to make the beauty of the humanities chief over the beauty of holiness. Prevailing influences are not always to mold his conduct. It will often become necessary for him to set his face like flint against them, consenting to perish in reputation that they may be overthrown. There is no requirement that he shall assimilate with every new thing that presents itself, and lose his individuality by absorption. His own thought and judgment are not to be surrendered until self is forgotten, but he should bring all things into the estimate of his methods. He should live and act in conscious harmony with all

that is virtuous, or noble, or pure. As all the normal qualities of the natural man are brought out, as the social instincts are developed and appropriately gratified, man in society will become more perfectly fitted to speed the benign mission of the Christian religion.

The age is also demanding purity, as well as high culture. It is no unfavorable sign that the people are asking that the Gospel they receive shall be backed by a pure and spotless life, a life comparatively faultless, and free from the ordinary defects of our humanity. A little learning, a strong lung, and a measure of piety will not satisfy the demand that vital Christianity shall be exemplified in the character of its advocate. An intellectual fitness, a general culture, must be armed with the weapons of a spiritual warfare, to become mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. The successful appeal is not made to the conscience with the intellect and the judgment. To change opinion is not always to change the heart and life. To teach a moral precept, and then violate it, is to rob it of its potency. A consistent life constrains the world to love the truth it knows. It inspires human endeavor to go beyond the intelligence, and obey the holiest affections. The world's Exemplar re promulgated and authoritatively announced the old Athenian doctrine that the only true method of teaching was by *precept* and *example*. To separate them is always to fail half-way. Preaching the Gospel is a holy work, and should claim from a holy people its best material.

I know of no more unfortunate thing for the success of a Church than to be represented by any one who will not measure with any force of character among his fellow-men. A pure and steadfast life can only purchase a character which will lend its force to every word and sermon. The soundness of a man's life, and his Christian excellence, can not fail to impress the world.

CHAPTER X.

MATERIAL AIDS.

THE material interests of the Church in this country seem to have reached a crisis. The separation of Church and state compels the adoption of what is known as the voluntary system. While faith in God is strong, while the people are alive to the vital interests of the Gospel, the voluntary system is equal to every emergency; but the world has never seen it brought to a test in times of general indifference. Its effectiveness depends very greatly on the living piety of the Church. Whether the Churches of Europe would have survived, under its operation in the last century, is an open question. While the theory is a just one, and has its basis in its own value and expediency, it yet partakes of the nature of an experiment.

There are difficulties ahead. Modern tendencies are toward religious indifference. If we are drifting out of a period of stern and gloomy faith into a broad and free religious atmosphere; if we are getting away from that peculiar type of obligation which appeared stronger to wield men than the force of civil authority, into the regions of a lax and accommodating morality,—it requires no prophet's vision

to see what may come upon us. We already see disastrous effects in individual cases. There is now an urgent call for ecclesiastical action relating to the monetary interests of the Churches. Discipline should not be so lax as to screen miserly wealth in the Church from its just tribute to God.

There is another difficulty. It appears that the world does not yet understand the philosophy of paper money. A history of its issues will sustain the proposition. The history of circulating banks, from the twelfth century down, shows that a species of financial blindness has followed in their wake, and time and again brought disaster on themselves and all concerned. It is to be kept in mind that paper money has generally been the child of necessity. Such was the issue of the Bank of Venice in the twelfth century, the Bank of England in 1694, and the Bank of Austria in 1816. The fact is also shown in the organic relation of so many governments in Europe to their banking systems. More paper money has been issued to meet the urgent necessities of war than for all the combined commercial objects of the world. In times of national peril, immediate safety is consulted above every other consideration. The issue of paper money, under the auspices and on the credit of the government, is likely to enliven business, and give a tone of cheerfulness and popular quietude unknown to any other agency. But if this money is issued to carry on war, which, in itself, is always a financial failure, there is likely to follow a depression.

The exigencies of English military operations

called forth an extra issue of circulating notes through the bank of England, and when this bank resumed specie payment, in 1823, there followed a wide-spread and painful disaster. The necessities of the American Revolution called out an issue which became worthless in spite of the good credit of the government. After the war of 1812, the finances of the country were in a terrible condition. The necessities of the late war created our National Banks, which, so far, have been successful. From now on may appear the difficulty, as shown by all experience. It may be that European history, in money matters, will repeat itself on these shores. The monetary condition of Europe, as compared with America, is a general and permanent depression. As compared with herself, the scarcity of money has simply brought about a different order of things. There is no waste of products. Every-where may be discovered the strictest economy. The ordinary Englishman or German knows the difference in the value of his small change. Nearly all nations in Europe have passed through phases of financial history which we have not reached, but which we are about to enter—a period of financial closeness. After we get into it or through it we will count our cent pieces. The time may come when it will be necessary to retrench in all the departments of life.

Now, if these probabilities are justly founded, what are the religious portents of the time? The disposition will be to retrench, first of all, around the altar of God. In view of the growth of Zion, and the plain mission of the American Church, this would

be fatal. What shall we do then? Give up? No! no! The demand is imperative for a greater sacrifice. We must teach our people that they hold their earthly substance as they hold their lives, through the will and in trust before God. It was intended in the divine economy that there should be a close relation between wealth and religion. Religion is not materialistic, but the most wonderful material results have always followed in its wake. Religion opens out the avenues of wealth, and wealth, in its turn, gives facilities for the progress of religion. They are mutual helpers. Wherever the Gospel is preached the arts of civilization are soon found at work. It has shown itself, indirectly, the greatest master of material forces. It inspires the soul with desires for a higher attainment and a better state, and awakens the highest energies for every human enterprise. It makes man in some measure dissatisfied with his present state, and leads him on to new lights and new achievements. These new advantages, in their turn, are to be used as voluntary agencies in the spread of the Gospel.

Wealth is a factor in the evangelism of the world. The success of Christ's cause greatly depends upon it. God loves money for the uses it may serve. His creatures are to engage in the production of material value as a duty, not for itself alone, but for moral and philanthropic ends. That heavenly-mindedness which affects to ignore earthly instrumentalities in the propagation of divine truth of all superstitions is the most pitiable. The man who adds no material value to society is in some sense a pauper. The man

who folds his arms to live on inherited wealth falls in the same category. It becomes every man's duty to *produce* something, and use that production to an honest purpose in the fear of God. The pursuit of wealth is right; only the soul that seeks it needs to be enlightened and sanctified. Money can be made the means of bettering and saving men. The more the better. In the right use of it can it only bring joy to the possessor.

Every man is under obligation to use his money for benevolent purposes according to his ability, and with the understanding that no man liveth to himself. He is responsible for *how* he uses it. There is a sin of indiscriminate alms-giving. He is to give where it will likely be productive. It would be safe to give on economic principles; in the light of a bargain, bringing benefit to both parties; especially in the work of education and the building up of spiritual forces. The ordinary business man is apt to underrate the value of Christian influences. There are a few men who are even blind to the benefits of civilized society. They can not see how that property or life would not be secure, nor how facilities for money-making could not be great among a vicious, immoral set of men. They are never willing to recognize the fact that the impalpable Christian influences of society contribute nearly every thing to make men sober and industrious. While these influences make men thousands of dollars, they are not induced to offer any support in return. They are religious paupers. They receive that for which they give nothing. They transmit the blessings of good

society into gold, and then refuse to support the Gospel which gives good society.

There are two kinds of workers for Christ. Christian educators and preachers, and those who accumulate wealth. One are producers of moral values, the other of material. Our teachers do not make money; they are simply consumers. But they give intellectual training to our children, for which we are willing to pay in money and think well of the bargain. So with the true preacher. He is the producer of moral and spiritual values which the business man makes immediate use of, and upon which he depends in his pursuit of wealth, and he ought to be as willing to pay for this as any other. The man who gains knowledge for selfish purposes is a miser. The voice of God calls him to put his talent and learning to their best uses. It is the same with him who accumulates wealth. He is called to prove his fidelity to God. In these times, if any thing, the money-maker is engaged in the most urgent of all works. The most pressing temporal need of the Church, at present, is more means to carry out its enterprises.

Let the Church heed the shout of the sainted Eddy, when he answered back from the coastings of the shoreless ocean: "*Forward is the word, no falling back; we must take the world for Christ; say so to our people; God calls us louder than thunder in the heavens; he strikes the hour; we must throw down our gold in the presence of God!*"

CHAPTER XI.

INNER CHURCH LIFE.

THE great problem of Christian life at the present time is, not how we shall explore the depths of certain great doctrines, or how we shall magnify the graces of some definite sphere of morals, but how we shall equalize and adjust our doctrinal attainments and our Christian duties. If the boatman simply pulls one oar, he will not be apt to make any progress. If he pulls both oars, giving ten pounds more weight to one than the other, his variation from the straight course may not be so apparent, but he is yet describing a circle only of larger dimensions.

It is the same in the agencies of Christian progress. One class of thinkers are impressed that God is most wonderfully sovereign in all his works; that man has very little to do in his salvation anyhow, and it appears useless to make very much exertion. Another class supposes that God has left the matter pretty much in human hands; that he has given us a kind of inherency of reformation, and that this reformation contains, somehow or other, an inherency of pardon, and from thence we ascend to the plane of a Christian life. The truth is midway from either extreme. It is evident that God uses both human and

divine agencies in redemption. If this fact is kept clear, many difficulties may be avoided, many phenomena may be explained which would otherwise appear mysterious. There should be no clashing, no discord between God's work and man's work in the redemptive scheme. There should be no encroachments one upon the other. Each has its sphere and its relative importance. Human instrumentality is a necessity of redemption, not of itself, but because God has made it so.

Man, by *nature*, has been invested with certain powers and affections, such as the natural faculties of the mind, a conscience, and a moral nature. He is endowed with the five senses, and a will of such wonderful power and freedom as to be able to bring these powers and affections into rebellion for all of life; yea, for all of eternity. These qualities belong to him naturally. They are not directly gifts of the atonement. God has made the success of the Church to rest measurably on the exercise of these natural faculties of man's being. Among other things, they are made to amount to something. They are also capable of great exertion and wonderful development. There is no end to human progress. Man's hand can always be kept busy in the perfection of its mechanisms; his brain can always be employed in new and great achievements. In some of its reaches, it has already seemed to throw off the hindrances of time and sense, and look in on the infinite. And yet, with all these strides of intellect and human activity, it has been difficult to secure an adjustment of redemptive agencies. Great streams

of thought and opinion and energy are flowing on toward the ocean of man's destiny, but they are forever cutting for themselves independent and diverging channels. Humanity in the abstract has never been able to gain very broad views of the divine economy and purposes. More than in any thing else is the finitude of human power illustrated in the vain struggle for permanent and practical adjustments of the human and the divine. Only for short periods of time in the world's history has there been any practical demonstration of their true relation. The tendency is toward the extremes on either side.

Man has always been, more or less, a creature of circumstances. In those dark times of the past, when nearly all races of men were the subjects of rude ignorance and great physical disparagement, when semi-barbarous surroundings made them more the creatures of impulse than of reason, their ideas of God and of life were greatly influenced by their surroundings. Proportionate to the degree in which the stern hand of necessity was laid upon them, in their inability to subdue nature's forces, and in proportion to the severity of the kingdoms and monarchies under which they lived, were their notions of the divine character likely to be tinged with elements of the severe and the dreadful. Savage life is not noted for its compassionate views of the Divine Being. The worshipers of Jupiter felt glad if they could simply escape his thunder-bolts. The Druids danced round their lurid fires for little more than to appease the gods. When the cruel hands of misfortune and necessity are laid on human life in the mass, the

tendency is to give a false coloring and an absoluteness to the divine sovereignty which is not warranted by Scripture. If the cold, cheerless views which hyper-Calvinism entertains of the divine nature need any palliation, it may be had in the remembrance that Calvinism was born amid many throes, in the stormy and fearful times of the Reformation.

Religious thought and sympathy are not flowing in this direction at the present time. From the frigid and shivering regions of the North Pole we have moved southward, have been warmed by the sun; and we are about to cross the Equator, and start on our journey toward the cold, shivering regions of the South Pole.

As has been intimated in this volume, in the last few centuries there has been a wonderful enlargement of the knowledges. Science and art and literature have brought with them ten thousand ameliorating forces. Through the discovery of the compass, commercial enterprise has broken all boundaries, and has claimed the whole world for its field. As a result, at our meals we enjoy the products of every continent. The art of printing has brought us books and periodicals without number. The railroad and the telegraph has given celerity to all our endeavors. These impulses of the later age have greatly advanced the temporal condition of men. From the original Englishman, who drove the great bear from his den in the rocks, and made it a home for himself and family, to the cultured Anglo-American, living like a king in a skillful palace of wood or stone, there is a wonderful material progress. Then, again,

this age has discovered so many errors in past opinions. Exploding superstitions, vanishing myths, and traditions, like will-o'-the-wisps before the day-dawn, are seen on every hand. The stubborn bolts which have held in secret so many treasures of the natural world have been broken, and it looks now like *human* energy, with its inborn forces, constitutes about all there is of human life.

The history of the last three hundred years appears like a demonstration of the fact that the world is now about able to shift for itself, without being bothered with any life of faith, without believing in any God, any heaven, or any hell. The Lord has removed the American people so far from pinching poverty and want, he has made them so easy and so comfortable, he has given them such wonderful blessings of life and freedom, that they are about to give over the idea that he will ever again frown on sin. The wholesome threatenings of the law are disagreeable pulpit themes in many high places of Zion. Our pious intentions are about to sugar the devil, and make him harmless as a lamb. The glamour of our prosperity is threatening to overwhelm us. We are in danger of drifting away from the stern faith of fifty years ago. The religious atmosphere of the future looks beclouded with the smoke of a slumbering dilettanteism. We are facing the issues of an age already drunken with the wine of worldliness. God help the Church to stem the tides just now, to gain a victory over the greed of wealth and the lust of gold! Then the world is safe.

We shall not be able to manage the Lord's

business on our own account. The success of the Church does not rest upon exactly the same basis with the success of an iron-furnace, or a manufactory, or a railroad. The simple agencies which make Odd-fellowship and Freemasonry successful will not insure the perpetuity of the Church. While the same measure of zeal and the same careful adjustings of ordinary appliances in worldly schemes become necessary to a healthful Church life, they are not alone necessary. There is an inner sanctuary in the Church which makes it the world's celestial visitor. Far above all mystic shrines and symbolisms there is a fountain of cleansing, whose waters are invested with regenerative properties. From this fountain flows the healing stream of the Christian religion. If any refuse to drink here, they have not the life of the Church. The Finisher of our Faith laid great stress on the definiteness of the agencies by which his kingdom should be built upon earth. Wherever these agencies have been utilized, the Church has flourished. No accidental enthusiasm, or work of chance, can ever successfully replace the influence of the Comforter. The Spirit must do his work. He must be recognized as the inspiration and life of the Church through all ages, as the only surety against all hinderances, the only hope of a steady and unconquerable progress.

The Church, to-day, is in the enjoyment of great achievements. There was a time when persecution and the rack were the fearful arguments of wickedness; when the secular arm was interposed to check the progress of Christianity; when the faithful had

to fly to the caves of the mountains, like foxes to their dens, for safety; when the sanguinary terrors of the Inquisition threatened to overawe the defenders of the faith; when intolerance swept through the Church, like the besom of destruction. These times have gone by, it is to be hoped, forever. Civil governments now, instead of spurning, draw their very life-blood from Christianity. In the downfall of the Church civil liberty, as it is at present constituted; would perish forever. On its moral teachings the state relies for good society. The steady light of Christian fires now shines across the Continent, and from the Lakes to the Gulf. It gleams into the darkness of heathenism. It is about to enwrap all tongues and peoples. The Church is flushed with the hope of the speedy conquest of the world. In the midst of these successes is a snare. The danger of a ship at sea is not only when the storm is fiercest, but also when the ocean is lulling to sleep. There is likewise danger when the sea has been calm for so long that the sailors have lost from their memories the realities of the tempest. If the storm should come upon them, it might find them unprepared in the very greatness of their preparations for a peaceful voyage.

The Church in our own country has passed through the ordeal of incipiency. It has gathered strength in its progress, until now a great moral inertia is propelling its mighty machinery. The impetus which it has gathered in the sterling struggles of the last century is sending it almost resistlessly into the future. This accumulated strength is a constant element of power.

The train whistles for the station. The engineer cuts off the steam. There goes the train down the track! See the almost resistless movement of that engine, with the propelling power all taken away! The force which it gathered coming down the track still moves it. Yet by the time it reaches the depot it has stopped, as resistless in its stillness as in its motion before! If religious forces were ever intended to stop, there would be no danger in taking away the moving force for a time; but they are not—and they operate on nearly the same principle. The perilous philosophy of ecclesiastical history has been to depend upon the spiritual momentum of the Church, as a kind of perpetual motion raised up to release men from the faith and obligations of a religious life.

This danger to the American people is not off yonder. It is upon us. We are in danger of being overwhelmed in the magnitude of the impulses we have started. The earnest, devout lives of which we boast are in danger of being touched with indifference. Religious profession is likely to become a convenience. A taste for the glowing and the dramatic is now being cultivated, over the vital and the pure. Church attendance is decreasing wherever talent does not draw. Wicked men see this, and rejoice, looking forward to the time when a low type of piety shall be the occasion to loose religion from its persuasiveness and its power over the people. Let the success of the Gospel in the salvation of souls be laid like a burden on the Church, and that time shall never come.

Christian Philanthropy.—Vital piety becomes a part of our national life, in that Christian philanthropy, in a distinctive sense, is the soul of our greatest energies. The value of a system is known by its fruits. Christianity now claims its right to the credence and respect of man, because it has bettered his condition. It has lifted him, under the pressure of a great many philanthropic forces. Nearly all classes of men are willing to recognize the material advantages of our religious system, while they are blind to its spiritual beauties. They avail themselves of its blessings, and dispute its divine origin. They gather from it the ability with which to assail it. From the bow of the ambushed Indian the eagle receives in its breast the arrow whose course was directed by one of his own pinions. Men see hypocrites, or some sorry specimen of redeeming grace, and they point to him and say, “Your system is like that.”

In these times, we are coming face to face with the fact that men are occupying the strange position of being in sympathy with all the philanthropic results of Christianity, without being in sympathy with its higher spiritual results. They are willing to trace practical benevolence to its source in the Christian sentiments of the age. They are not willing to trace these *sentiments* to *their* source. The Christian system is a grand *fact*, a good thing; but not a revealed truth, or a saving power. It brings men nearer together, but does not bring them back to God. In close relation with this idea, lies the distinction between moral and Christian philanthropy.

In the latter, the God sense has been superadded to the natural or pathematic emotions, lifting them into a more brilliant sphere of religious enterprise. The distinction can be illustrated in a comparison of humanitarian efforts before the Christian era with those of the present.

Love to man is an original instinct. In its intensity and clearer outlines it was blunted by the Fall. The introduction of human selfishness simply prescribed its boundaries. It yet exists as the wreck of what it once was. It gives out an obscured light. It is like a cheerful star-gleam shining into the night between two brilliant days. Christian philanthropy is the clear, the forcible, the absolute light of the noonday. God himself measured out its extent to us when he gave his "unspeakable gift." It looks on man from the vantage-ground of the cross. Christ says, "Love one another as I have loved you;" and, again, "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

The moral goodness of the human heart has never led any race of people much beyond the law of reciprocity; that is, the law of equal rights and privileges and mutual charities. It has always seemed to expend itself in good wishes and a few feeble efforts for the welfare of mankind. It will help a relative or a friend without hope of remuneration. At the same time, it can remain contented and undisturbed in the midst of a great deal of suffering and misery. China and India have not advanced the condition of their masses for a thousand years. In these countries purely moral forces have had a chance to show what they can do. They have had every oppor-

tunity to reveal the extent to which the natural impulses of the heart may lead a people in the absence of a perfect example and the leadings of an authoritative Spirit. The vastness of purely intellectual and moral potencies find here their best showing. In these countries, as in all others where the banner of the cross has not been lifted, no great estimate has ever been placed on the individual, and no great interest has ever been taken in his condition. Consequently the millions lie in wretchedness and want, victims of human passion and oppression; with no hand to help them. If the moral philanthropy of the human heart is the home of such wonderful charity; if it alone is the inspiration of European and American benevolence, why has it not lifted Asia from her thrall? Her climes are as fair, her valleys are as fertile, as ours. The God of nature has blessed her with as lavish a hand, and yet there she lies, holding half the population of the globe like a dead weight. It may be said, her monarchies have been so severe that the people have never been able to disenthral themselves.

But Europe was in the chains of as severe a thrall-dom a thousand years ago. Something or other has broken these chains. European monarchies have been toned down, their severities have been taken away, and a republic has been given to America. What is this something? Here is the vital issue. The moral teachings of Grecian and Roman philosophy were often as sublime and truthful as any thing in the revealed doctrines. Socrates and Plato and Seneca reasoned eloquently from first principles, and

the people grew worse under their teachings. Such has been the case with all ethnic systems. There is no moral force at man's command by which he can successfully and constantly counteract his innate tendencies toward the corruption of his own life and that of society. As it has been in pagan systems, so will the world grow worse under a Gospel splendid in its theory and magnificence unless the principle of the Spirit's work be kept alive as a strong under-current of conviction pervading all thought and feeling and action.

There are a great many forces at work in these times which have not been estimated at their true value until lately. It appears that the world is just now beginning to reap the secondary and remote benefits of Christianity. The mission and ministry of Christ started a great under-current of influences which are just now beginning to crop out and be made available. The Savior's commission was, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the Gospel." A strange commission in that age. Nothing like it was ever heard of before. As the disciples had opportunity they were to do good *unto all men* through the love of Christ, which constraineth them.

From the beginning Christianity had in view the conversion of the whole world. Such an idea, so far as I know, does not belong to any pagan system. Jupiter and Apollo and Mercury never had any missionaries in any distinctive sense. On the other hand, the religion of the Bible gathered in its scope the wide world, and it has not yet given over the undertaking in all its magnitude. That same old love

is still in the bosom of the Church, whose source is the fountain of that life, which came on the Day of Pentecost to inbreathe its everlasting convictions into the souls of men, and lift them from the twilight of human love into its noonday splendors.

And now, what is it doing more than has ordinarily been done, in all ages? It is calling into life a combination of world-wide influences.

First. It magnifies the individual man, in giving him an estimate and experience of his value before God. This has led him to seek a recognition of his personal rights in both Church and state. He becomes worthy to have the field of knowledge opened to him, and he is now being educated. The common-school system of our country, which is so wonderfully training the mind and lifting the masses of the people into the highest planes of intelligence, has been drawn from the great deep of Christian philanthropy.

Second. In that ancient time, before the Christian religion began to have its effects on civilization, more than in giving to the state a few good citizens, such things as asylums and orphan-homes and hospitals were isolated facts. Now they are every-where, supported in the most perfect system. They are established in almost every county, and supported from the public treasury, affording relief to the poor and the unfortunate.

Third. The universal love of Christ's Gospel silently brought about the liberation of Roman slaves before it was fully under headway in the Latin world. This same love created a sentiment against slavery in

the United States, which finally resulted in its overthrow. It has further put its powerful hand on the slave-traffic of the world, and bids fair to stop it entirely. The divine philanthropy of the Gospel has gone to those countries where human slavery exists; and, as sure as it can get a hold on society, the shackles will fall of necessity.

Fourth. This love, in our own country, keeps alive a system of benevolences such as no rule of force could ever command.

Fifth. It is gradually fusing and blending the forces of Protestantism, so that its collective agencies can be used as never before.

Sixth. It is creating a sentiment against intemperance, which is destined to work its overthrow. It inheres in Christian philanthropy alone to interdict the liquor traffic, from the distillery down.

Seventh. Among the most important ameliorative forces which the Gospel of Christ has invoked is the science of international law. In ancient times nations were either disrelated, or else they were likely to be belligerent. No law governed their relations but that of force. Strength meant dominion; weakness meant dependency. Instead of the survival of the fittest, it was a survival of the strongest. The right of conquest for dominion was recognized,—a state of opinion and feeling which brought almost constant warfare. We hazard the assertion, that from the introduction of Christianity the popular disrelish for war began to grow stronger. After a while there were feeble attempts made at adjustment and reconciliation. It was finally believed that a

nation might have honor, as well as a man. In course of time treaties were made, and faithfully kept. Then principles of law were laid down, regulating national conduct. The probabilities of war between the nations of Christendom were lessened. They now look in the face of this international code, and understand each other better. And the time appears near when all difficulties may be amicably settled at a national tribunal, prepared beforehand for the purpose; when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them;" when swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

These influences, with many others, are the felt throbs of the great, living, beating heart of religion; and they find their source in the "love wherewith he loved us." These are the secondary final causes for which Christ came into the world. The grandest impulses of this age are but the *active agencies* of the Holy Ghost. They are but the sum of individual impulses. The soul, converted, comes into a new world. New lights, new feelings, new desires, new influences, are thrown around it,—all awakened by the Holy Spirit. Then, as drops form the ocean, as rivulets form the stream, as atoms make up the universe, so this general life of goodness, of virtue, of benevolence, has been given to society. Can speculative philosophy show any such results? Will sci-

olism please show any such fruits of its systems? It is now a truism that, wherever the Gospel goes, there is life and enterprise and progress in every thing.

In this grand work the only citadel to be guarded is the inner life of the Church. Vital piety must be kept in the popular heart. The power of the living spirit must keep pace with these multiplied energies. Then, we must be in earnest. It is not the flash of the sword of the Spirit that cuts, but its edge. It is not the sheet-lightning which tears the oak, but the sharp and arrowy lines which come with the power of the thunder-bolt. There is no demand now for general indefinite religious impressions, but deep and clear convictions that God is in Christ reconciling the world, and that we are hid with him in God. We must know experimentally that the doctrines of the Gospel are true. A smothered and sleepy fantasy can not be substituted for the stronger convictions of faith. If the true fear of God and a sense of his majesty and omnipotence dwell in the popular heart, its morals and its laws will always be kept within proper limits. We need a faith which unconsciously, though more decidedly, influences the popular heart. It is the aim of Christianity to inweave in society an honest and settled sobriety of thought, which, without organization or plan, will rebuke the evil and sanction the right.

One of the positive hinderances to personal religious life at the present time is the great mania for organizing. We must club together. We can do

hardly any thing without some associative prompting. Our Christian benevolences and our charities are nearly all according to "Constitution and By-laws." We put a great estimate on the amount of work done, to the neglect of what we are. Our personal relations with God are lost sight of in our zeal to become workers. Untold demoralizings are the result of a failure to observe the great law of fitness. Labor in the cause of Christ which is without character will soon expend its force, and will endanger the healthful influences of Christian labor, and, very likely, cultivate an idea that religion is a succession of good deeds, rather than a principle; a collective and temporary impulse to do some good thing, rather than a deep and real force, moving all the faculties of the mind and all the affections of the heart toward things divine.

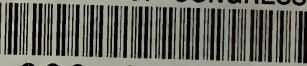
Religion is something living, powerful, blessed. It is not honesty, or morality, or virtue. These are its fruits. It is the illumination of the soul with the highest joys and impulses. It dislodges evil desires and propensities, and demands of the individual daily self-denial. It gives truth the empire over the mind, and "Holiness to the Lord" is written on the heart and life. It is not the knowledge which satisfies the understanding, but the experienced truth that purifies the inner man, that elevates, ennobles, and sanctifies the whole nature. Religion is yet practical; it may be transmuted into flesh and blood and brain and affection, and be sent out like a brilliant light from the treasure of the

inward life. Religion enables a man to spiritualize every thing he touches.

After all our apologies for Christianity, after all our arguments for its truth, after every show of learning and rhetoric in its defense, it needs to be shown in the lives of Christians.

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